

AAgalloco- Support SB0871 and SB0872.pdf

Uploaded by: Andrea Agalloco

Position: FAV

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB0871 (with the workgroup amendment) and SB0872

SB0871, Social Workers - Licensure Examinations - Moratorium and Workgroup
SB0872, State Board of Social Work Examiners - Temporary License to Practice Social Work

Maryland Senate Finance Committee Hearing

Andrea L. Agalloco, MSW, LCSW-C

March 9, 2023

Dear Members of the Committee:

My name is Andrea Agalloco. I have been a resident of Montgomery County Maryland since 2016 and live in District 20 currently. I'm a clinical social worker licensed in Maryland, DC and Virginia and work at a Federally Qualified Health Center with locations in Washington, DC, Silver Spring and Adelphi. I oversee a perinatal mental health program, focused on the prevention and treatment of perinatal mood and anxiety disorders. I am in strong support for **SB0871 (with the workgroup amendment) and SB0872 which would provide temporary licensing and a moratorium on using exams in the licensing process for social workers in Maryland.**

These bills are especially important to the population served at the agency where I work where we are struggling to hire enough behavioral health providers to serve the needs in the Medicaid and uninsured populations we serve. The delay in licensure due to racial bias in testing directly impacts the ability of social workers to earn an income commensurate with their training in social work. These social workers also must pay exam fees repeatedly, which has a financial impact on them and their families. When the path to licensure takes longer, social workers lose out on earning income matching their training and degree and this impacts the workforce development and retention we're seeing in community behavioral health. The bias that has been shown in the current social work licensing exams has impacted more than 1200 mental health providers, more specifically social workers of color, who are older, or who speak a foreign language. These providers could be making such a difference for participants we're seeing at my agency if they can begin their clinical practice! There's a high need for Spanish speaking clinicians and clinicians of color to meet the needs on Montgomery County and Prince Georges County and that is precisely the potential clinicians who are being impacted by these biased exams. The agency where I work continues to operate with a waitlist for services, primarily for

people of color, non-English speakers, who would so benefit from receiving services from the very social workers who are struggling to be licensed to practice.

I urge this committee to take swift action in support of SB0871 (with the workgroup amendment) and SB0872 in order to readily allow educated and trained clinicians to begin serving clients throughout the state of Maryland. This is especially warranted given we have no evidence that the licensure exam is effectively assessing quality or safe social work practice. I encourage the passage of SB0871 with the workgroup amendment to create a more diversified workgroup to look at ways we could be assessing safe and quality social work practice in our state. Thanks for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Andrea L. Agalloco, MSW, LCSW-C

105 Whitmoor Terrace, Silver Spring, MD 20901

SB 872_1 PDF.pdf

Uploaded by: Chloe Perez

Position: FAV

March 9, 2023

Senate Bill 872

State Board of Social Work Examiners – Temporary License to Practice Social Work

Position: FAVORABLE

I am Chloe Bernardi, President/CEO of Hearts and Homes for Youth and public policy co-chair of The Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY) which is an association of private child caring organizations providing foster care, group homes, and other services through more than 200 programs across Maryland. The members of MARFY represent providers who serve Maryland's children who are most vulnerable and are in out of home placements due to abuse, neglect or severe mental health, and medical needs. Hearts and Homes for Youth provides residential homes, treatment foster care, and independent living programs for pregnant and parenting teen moms throughout Maryland and have served over 41,000 young people since 1964. I have been in the field since 1997 and am an LCSW-C Supervisor.

We urge you to vote in favor of this bill to alleviate the overwhelming strain on the field of social work and lack of licensed professionals available to meet the needs of our youth and families throughout Maryland. As a result of a backlog in test exam appointments, the disparate social work board exam resulting in people of color failing at an alarming rate and the increase in acuity in mental health needs, we need social workers now more than ever. Due to the shortage, youth are not able to be placed in therapeutic environments and are languishing in hospitals, living in hotels, on the street or sleeping in DSS offices. This bill would allow social workers who have graduated from a school of social work, passed all of their background checks and completed their 2 year internship, thus having experience in the field, to provide services under the supervision of a Licensed Clinical Social Worker Supervisor. They would have strenuous oversight and is very similar to how they operated and the services they delivered during their internship.

Maryland is in a dire state as it relates to social work and ensuring that our young people and communities needs are being adequately met. We ask for a



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favorable vote for Senate Bill 872. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Respectfully,

Chloe Bernardi, LCSW-C

BurkeSWEARTestimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Christina Burke

Position: FAV

Burke Testimony

For Hearing, March 10, 2023

My name is Christina Burke. I am a Deaf licensed graduate social worker in DC and master social worker in MD. I am in favor of passing both SB871 and SB872. I am writing to share my story with you as a Deaf social worker who faces challenges current license regulations due to being restricted and inflexible. They are making the social work licensing process difficult to become a fully licensed clinical social worker.

I obtained my MSW degree from Gallaudet University in 2015 and moved to Oregon where I was hired as a school counselor at the school for the deaf in Salem in September 2016. Since there was no licensed clinical social worker to supervise me at my job, I sought supervision in the community. As a Deaf person whose primary language is ASL, I wanted to find an ASL proficient deaf or hearing supervisor so that we could communicate directly. If I were to work with a licensed clinical social worker who did not know ASL, there would be two challenges. One, I would have to pay for both the supervision and the interpreter. Two, my supervisor would have no cultural competence with the population that I was working with.

After determining that there was no licensed clinical social worker available to supervise me in ASL, my work recommended that I contact a Deaf psychologist, Dr. Jaime Wilson. Dr. Wilson is a nationally respected Deaf clinician and his background can be found at this link: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/jabwilson/>. The Oregon Board of Social Workers required Dr. Wilson to complete six CEUs of specific content needed by board approved clinical supervisors. He did complete them and then we were approved by the board to begin our clinical supervision. I earned 1,131 hours under his tutelage. I was extremely grateful to the Oregon Board for its equitable decision on my behalf. Their actions cemented my faith in my chosen profession of Social Work.

I ended my employment in Oregon for family reasons and to support the significantly larger Deaf and hard of hearing community in Washington D.C. Before moving to Washington D.C. in October 2017, I called the District of Columbia Board of Social Work by using a video relay interpreting service to inquire if I could transfer my hours there from Oregon; they did not respond directly to my question about counting the Oregon hours. They only said that I can apply for LCSW when I meet their 3,000 hours requirement. I took their LGSW examination in June 2018. I failed it the first time by a few points. I retook the exam and passed it in September 2018. I began working as a mental health counselor for Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at Gallaudet University in Washington D.C. in November 2018 under LICSW supervisors who were Deaf and/or proficient in ASL until leaving that position in August 2019. CAPS' website can be found at this link: <https://gallaudet.edu/counseling-psychological-services/>.

I then found a Deaf supervisor who had both LICSW and LCSW-C licenses. That supervisor recommended that I obtain an LMSW through endorsement. I applied and got approved by the

Board of Social Work in Maryland. Then I became an independent contractor as a mental health teletherapist for National Deaf Therapy (NDT) and began seeing clients under an LICSW and LCSW-C supervisor in May 2020. To learn more about NDT, their link could be found at: <https://nationaldeaftherapy.com/>.

With Oregon, CAPS, and NDT, I had completed 3,000 hours of clinical hours and 100 hours of face-to-face supervision by May 2022. I submitted my application for the LICSW on May 26th, 2022. They denied my application on July 6th, 2022, because I did not have supervised hours by an LICSW supervisor in the state of Oregon. On July 11th, 2022, I appealed to the District of Columbia Board of Social Work's decision against my request for LCSW.

The District of Columbia Board of Social Work denied my appeal on July 25th, 2022, and requested me to complete 9 hours of immediate face to face supervision and 1118 general supervision or work hours under an LICSW.

On August 10th, 2022, I contacted Ms. Njeri Clay, the BSWE Staff Social Worker by email, explained my situation with the District of Columbia Board of Social Work, and asked her if Maryland would consider my situation and accept the hours from Oregon towards my application for LCSW-C. Ms. Clay replied back, stating that the Maryland BSWE does not accept supervision outside of their profession and that she did not see an allowed exception indicated in their regulations. Her response deterred me from applying for the LCSW-C. I have continued to practice under supervision and currently, I am at 2,265 hours of supervised social work experience and 126 hours of periodic direct face-to-face supervision (not counting the Oregon hours)

While I understand the regulations, I felt that my circumstances warrant further consideration, and in September 2022, I contacted the National Association for the Deaf, "the nation's premier civil rights organization of, by, and for deaf and hard of hearing individuals in the United States of America" to discuss my situation (<https://www.nad.org/about-us/>). Due to competing demands on their resources, a meeting has not yet been scheduled.

Thank you for taking the time to read my written testimony. I hope my situation will give you a better idea of how inequities in the licensing process for BIPOC candidates and candidates in other populations is an issue that needs to be resolved.

Respectfully,

Christina Burke, MSW, LMSW, LGSW
christinaburke@nationaldeaftherapy.com

Pathways to Housing-SB0871-SB0872-Favorable-3-9-23

Uploaded by: Christy Respress

Position: FAV



March 9, 2023

To: Members of the Senate Finance Committee

From: Pathways to Housing DC

Re: SB0871 Social Workers - Licensure Examinations - Moratorium and Workgroup
SB0872 State Board of Social Work Examiners - Temporary License to Practice Social Work

Position: Favorable

Pathways to Housing DC opened in 2004 when we brought the Housing First model to Washington, DC. We were thrilled to expand our services into Montgomery County, MD in 2018 with the receipt of a five-year innovation grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration that we called “Pathways Home”. Using a client-centered approach, our efforts target Montgomery County’s residents experiencing homelessness who are living with substance use and/or co-occurring mental health disorders whose service needs are not being met by existing programs. With recent expansions of outreach and housing programs in Montgomery County, Pathways to Housing DC is also responding to an increase in our Hispanic population where approximately 11% of our clients identify as Hispanic or Latino. Our program meets the needs of this community by ensuring that our services are available in both English and Spanish languages.

Pathways to Housing DC fully supports **SB0871 and SB0872**, which provide temporary licensing and a moratorium on using exams in the licensing process for social workers. States across the country are grappling with the profoundly discriminatory impact of biased licensing exams that have deprived Maryland of more than 1200 committed and competent mental health providers, specifically those of color, older, or foreign language speakers. Failing the test puts an undue financial and personal burden on these skilled professionals. Also, the exams deny Marylanders the help they deserve, especially in communities of color where the need is growing. We must remove the undue barriers to their licensure. In over 40 years of exam history, **there is no evidence that the exam effectively assesses quality or safety of social work practice**. These two bills allow otherwise qualified social workers to enter and advance practice, while the State develops an alternative practice-based assessment for licensing.

We have directly witnessed staff who our licensed social workers have assessed as qualified and competent be impacted by the use of the Association of Social Work Boards' exams.

For the reasons listed above, Pathways to Housing DC urges the committee to issue favorable reports for Senate Bills 0871 and 0872.



Christy Respress, MSW, President & CEO

Andre Pelegrini, MBA, Chief Operating Officer

Janelle Greene Smith, JD, M.Div., Vice President of Housing First

Gwendolyn A. Harter, LCSW-C, Director of Montgomery County Programs

Sara Brown, LCSW-C, Director of Veterans Services

Pucci Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Concetta Pucci

Position: FAV

TESTIMONY

Concetta Pucci, PhD, LGSW, LMSW

March 10, 2023

Hello, my name is Dr. Concetta Pucci. I am a Field Program Assistant and Lecturer in the Social Work Department at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. Additionally, I am currently providing clinical therapy services with two agencies: National Deaf Therapy and Deaf REACH to earn my clinical hours.

This took me over 20 years to get where I am today and I am still not clinically licensed as a social worker yet because of language and accessibility barriers in taking exams.

Why? Because of my DeafBlind disability. I am testifying in supporting both bills – SB0871: Social Workers - Licensure Examinations - Moratorium and Workgroup and SB0872: State Board of Social Work Examiners- Temporary License to Practice Social Work. Here's my timeline story to give you an idea how hard it was and it still is.

May 2001: Graduated with Bachelors of Science in Social Work (BSSW) at Rochester Institute of Technology

May 2002: Graduated with Masters of Social Work (MSW) in an Advanced Standing Program at New York University.

Sept. 2002: Hired as a school social worker at Lexington School for the Deaf in New York City with a condition that I am required to be licensed by a deadline.

2002 - 2005: Took New York ASWB's Master-level social work exams 5 times. Failed by 1-4 points every time and I was so close to pass the exam. My NY accommodations were given as follows: (1) two extended hours given on the exam, (2) taking the exam in a private room, and (3) ASL interpreters to interpret only vocal instructions by the exam proctor.

- 2003: I was required to be a licensed school social worker in New York State so I was hired as a school social worker and was given a timeline to get my license. I had to apply to get a provisional social work license and was rejected because I failed a few exams previously. I had to get a “teacher’s certificate” which was a loophole in the system that I had to find ways to keep my job with the human resource manager and supervisor’s support. They knew that they needed to keep me because I am Deaf and needed to provide counseling services to deaf kids by using American Sign Language (ASL) in school.
- 2005: Took my 5th exam and failed once again so I basically gave up. I felt that I am repeating over and over which did not get me to move forward so I re-evaluated and decided to explore another career option that I can succeed in. That was a very emotionally traumatizing experience for me.
- 2006: The most difficult decision I had to make was leaving my job as I truly loved working with my students and I could not move forward without a license. I decided to quit my social work career and pursued to get my PhD at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C.
- 2012: Graduated with my PhD in Special Education Administration.
- 2015: I was still bothered that I am still not a licensed social worker. A little thing behind my head was telling me, “Let’s try one more time!” So I registered for DC 's ASWB exam. DC’s regulation of accommodations is different from NY as follows: (1) ASL interpreters for the exam proctor’s vocal instructions AND translating the English exam questions and multiple choice answers if needed, (2) taking the exam in the private room, and (3) four hours extended with lunch break. As a matter of fact, this was very helpful because some questions/answers were too challenging especially when two answers were TOO similar so I had interpreters translate them and I understood BETTER through ASL – my native language. After 10 years of hiatus from the social work practice, as a result, I FINALLY passed and got my LGSW in DC.
- 2019: Hired as a Field Program Assistant at Gallaudet University with an understanding that I am required to be clinical licensed to supervise student-interns. I started earning my clinical hours by working as a mental health therapist for Deaf REACH – supervised by LICSW.

2021: Got my LMSW in MD by endorsement. And, began my National Deaf Therapy work and supervised by both LICSW and LCSW-C.

March 2023: I have about 300 clinical hours left to go before taking my clinical license exam. Now, I am experiencing anxiety and fear of taking the exam again. Taking exams over and over is re-traumatizing. So terrified.

Who else would experience this kind of long journey to become a clinical licensed social worker? Us – the Black, Brown, Indigenous, People of Color, Individuals with Disabilities, Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard-of-Hearing members, Elders, those whose primary language is not English, and marginalized individuals. It is evident this is a long history of problematic issues that the ASWB licensing exam is not equitable and accessible. This does harm many of us – causing us trauma, pain, and harm. Passing these two bills would be part of the anti-racism movement in our profession which would increase more access to provide mental health services in the state of MD. Please support these two bills so others do not have to experience the same trauma as I did in my 20+ years and I do not have to experience re-trauma again when I take my clinical exam after I am done with my clinical hours this year.

Thank you for your time reading this very important testimony.

Respectfully submitted by Concetta Pucci, PhD, LGSW, LMSW
concetta.pucci@gallaudet.edu

Written Testimony for MGA.pdf

Uploaded by: Eleshia Thomas

Position: FAV

I Eleshia Thomas, MSW support for SB0871 and SB0872, which provide temporary licensing and a moratorium on using exams in the licensing process for social workers.

States across the country are grappling with the profoundly discriminatory impact of biased licensing exams that have deprived Maryland of more than 1200 committed and competent mental health providers, specifically those of color, older, or foreign language speakers.

- Failing the test puts an undue financial and personal burden on these skilled professionals. Many have spent thousands of dollars in their attempts to pass, while working in lower income jobs because of the lack of a license.
- The exams deny Marylanders the help they deserve, especially in communities of color where the need is growing and where cultural connection to clients is essential.

While the exams clearly create undue barriers to licensure disproportionately affecting applicants of color, in over 40 years of exam history, there is no evidence that the exam effectively assesses quality or safety of social work practice.

- These two bills allow otherwise qualified social workers to enter and advance practice, while the State develops an alternative practice-based assessment for licensing.

I am currently studying for the aswb master level exam and as a person in the field I find myself being intimidated by this exam due to the biases material and unrealistic practice statements. I am currently the owner of a outpatient mental clinic in Baltimore, Maryland. I pride myself in being apart of the human service field and I am looking forward to being an license therapist however I am extremely discouraged when seeing the number of people who have not been able to pass this exam. With the growing number of social workers leaving the field due to burn out or retirement it is critical for more social workers to support and enter the field of social work in order to provide effective and need services to humanity. Please consider passing these bills for the benefit of the citizens of Maryland as well as the better of communities across the United States and globally.

Sincerely,

Eleshia B. Thomas, MSW

March 9, 2023

SB0871 0872 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Ellen Line

Position: FAV

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to ask for your support for SB 0871 with amendments and SB 0872.

These bills address the biased exams (created by the ASWB) that Maryland law currently requires social workers to pass in order to be licensed to practice. The ASWB recently released statistics showing discriminatory pass rates based on race, age, and first language spoken.

Considering that passing these exams are effectively required to practice social work in Maryland, there is no place for *any* bias or discrimination in their pass rates. These bills place a moratorium on using the exam while a work-group is established to plan alternatives and create the option for the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners to offer a temporary license to folks who have struggled to pass the exam.

While it's proponents would say the exam ensures social worker competence and therefore greater safety for the public, there is no evidence that the exam effectively assesses quality or safety of social work practice.

This biased exam is effectively barring qualified social workers from being able to practice social work with no public benefit, when we are experiencing shortages of social workers across the state. I am a therapist in private practice and have maintained a waitlist of folks wanting to receive mental health therapy, since I started my practice in 2019. No one should have to wait months to see a therapist for necessary mental health care, and this exam has deprived Maryland of more than 1200 committed and competent mental health providers since it has been in use.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ellen Line, LCSW-C". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ellen Line, LCSW-C
Founder and Clinical Social Worker
ROAR Wellness Co.

SB872_SWTempLicense_KennedyKriegerSupport.pdf

Uploaded by: Emily Arneson

Position: FAV



DATE: March 10, 2023 **COMMITTEE:** Senate Finance Committee
BILL NO: Senate Bill 872
BILL TITLE: State Board of Social Work Examiners - Temporary License to Practice Social Work
POSITION: Support

Kennedy Krieger Institute supports Senate Bill 872 - State Board of Social Work Examiners - Temporary License to Practice Social Work.

Bill Summary:

Senate Bill 872 requires the State Board of Social Work Examiners to issue a temporary license to practice social work to an applicant who has met the education and experience requirements.

Background:

Kennedy Krieger Institute is dedicated to improving the lives of children and young adults with developmental, behavioral, cognitive, and physical challenges. Kennedy Krieger's services include inpatient, outpatient, school-based, and community-based programs. Over 27,000 individuals receive services annually at Kennedy Krieger. We employ more than 2,600 persons who play a vital role in our mission to transform the lives of children with disorders of the brain.

At Kennedy Krieger, clinical social workers are part of an interdisciplinary teams of professionals. Through their work, they enable individuals and their families to utilize their natural strengths to manage the ongoing realities and stresses of disability and other emotional or medical conditions that affect individual, family and community functioning and relationships. The social work department provides the following clinical services, as determined by individual and family needs, through any one of the department's inpatient or outpatient programs at Kennedy Krieger.

- Clinical evaluation of individual and family functioning
- Development of an individualized treatment plan
- Individual, family, couple, play and group therapy and counseling
- Educational, support and stress management groups
- Case management

Rationale:

Before the pandemic, there was a global shortage in the healthcare workforce¹. Predictions forecast that employment demands in healthcare will grow faster this decade compared to all other occupations. This includes an increased need for social workers, with demand expected to increase 13% through 2029.²

Social workers are an essential part of the care team. But, due to ongoing shortages, there is a lack of available individuals to serve in these positions. By granting temporary licenses, the State can expedite the process of getting educated individuals into the workforce while they work on passing the examination.

Kennedy Krieger Institute requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 872.

Emily Arneson – AVP Government Affairs – arneson@kennedykrieger.org or 443-631-2188
707 North Broadway Baltimore, Maryland 21205 (443) 923-9200/Telephone (443)923-9125/Facsimile

¹ Figueroa CA, Harrison R, Chauhan A, Meyer L. Priorities and challenges for health leadership and workforce management globally: a rapid review. *BMC Health Services Research*. 2019;19(1)doi:10.1186/s12913-019-4080-7

² Source: www.bls.gov/ooh/community-and-social-service/social-workers.htm#tab-1

Health Care for the Homeless - 2023 FAV SB 872 - T

Uploaded by: Joanna Diamond

Position: FAV



HEALTH CARE FOR THE HOMELESS TESTIMONY

IN SUPPORT OF

SB 872 – State Board of Social Work Examiners - Temporary License to Practice Social Work

Senate Finance Committee

March 10, 2023

Health Care for the Homeless strongly supports SB 872, which would authorize the State Board of Social Work Examiners to issue a temporary license to practice social work to an applicant who, except for passing an examination otherwise required under law, has met the appropriate education and experience requirements for a license issued to practice master social work or certified social work-clinical. Allowing otherwise fully qualified social work professionals to obtain a temporary license both helps address the dire shortage of social workers as well as meet the high need of many communities that are currently underserved.

We must have an immediate response to the impact to BIPOC professionals and communities of discriminatory licensing exams, which have kept many out of the social work profession and/or independent practice. This bill would go a long way in correcting an undeniable injustice and eliminating the racial disparities that exist in passage of this problematic examination.

The Data Shows Stark Disparities, Particularly for Race and Age¹

In August of 2022, the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) released a report confirming what we already knew: the examination pass/fail rates showed stark disparities across race, age, and language.

According to the national data, the pass rates for the clinical examination (with 2+ attempts) across race was: Black: 57%; Hispanic/Latino 77%; White: 91%. This national data broken down by age was: age ranges 18-29: 91% and age ranges 50+: 65%. Also according to national data, the pass rates for the masters exam (with 2+ attempts) broken down by race was: Black: 52%; Hispanic/Latino: 71%; White: 91%.

The national data on rates for first-time passed at the Clinical Level (LCSW-C) broken down by race include: Black: 43.5%; Hispanic/Latinx: 63%; White: 83.5. At the Masters Level (LMSW), the exam first-time pass rate by race was: Black: 44.65%; Hispanic/Latinx: 64%; and White: 86%.

According to *Maryland* data broken down by race and ethnicity, the first-time passed rate for the Clinical (LCSW-C) Exam was: Black: 53.4%; Hispanic/Latinx: 65.9%; and White: 88.4%. For the Masters (LMSW) Exam, the first-time pass rate by race was: Black: 51.4%; Hispanic/Latinx: 75%; and White: 90%.

This data cannot be ignored.

We Need Equitable Licensure for Social Workers

We seek inclusivity and equitability in the licensure process and the elimination of harmful barriers for BIPOC social work professionals. Licensure does not need to be based on exam scores, especially exams that are

¹ Testimony data and references provided, in part, by Social Workers for Equity and Anti-Racism (SWEAR) and National Association of Social Workers – Maryland (NASW-MD).

discriminatory and lack evidence that they are related to actual practice. The disaggregated data show glaring and unacceptable discrepancies in pass rates based on race, age, educational institution, and geographic location. This results in tangible harms, including spending \$100s or \$1,000s to re-prepare and re-take the exams as well as untold psychological harm to qualified professionals unable to pass the exam by no fault of their own.

This problem is exacerbated by the fact that we have a significant workforce shortage when it comes to social workers. **We must aggressively address the implicit biases and root causes of these data.**

Below is an account from Health Care for the Homeless Therapist Case Manager Tammy Montague, LMSW

To reduce the harms of the 'BIPOC' population associated with the Association of Social Work Board (ASWB) licensing Exams

My name is Tammy Montague, LCSW-C; and I am employed with Health Care for the Homeless as a Therapist Case Manager in Baltimore City, Maryland.

As an older black woman practicing social work, I was not surprised by the racial disparities in pass rates for people of color that was published last August by the ASWB. I was told many times by other black people that struggled in getting licensed as a social worker to "choose the answer that a middle-aged white woman would choose". I understood at that point that I would be facing adversity. It would not be the first time I have experienced 'white privileged' affects for "black folk". Nevertheless, the thought of reducing my self-image as a black professional that spent years in academia and graduating from a nationally accredited HBCU ached at the core of my being.

I remember the old saying, "I got mines; you got yours to get". And I don't subscribe to this but it feels like the social work profession through the required ASWB exam, that has now shown itself to be a racially biased exam, has moved to a point of excluding and leaving people behind. If this is the case, then black people have been chosen to walk in that exclusion. After 3 times of failing the LCSW-C, I passed on the 4th time. I must say that it was a hard journey to overcome. While others think that after passing the LCSW-C exam it is a time of rejoicing, I know in my heart that it is not. As our new governor, Wes Moore, said,

"Let's Get To Work! As we embark together on our state's next chapter, we commit to our shared mission to leave no one behind. No matter where you start in life, you deserve an equal opportunity to succeed – a job you can raise a family on and the chance to create wealth for you and your family."

I fear that others will take on the mindset that an exam, any exam, even a racially biased exam, is a way of determining competence, ethical standards, and the ability to serve humanity. We must address this issue today. Please!!!! We have to stop hurting one another for the sake of professional security. I remember hearing our former governor stating that we must "shatter the status quo" in order to make appropriate changes for the betterment of our society.

Failing the exam was devastating for me and it took almost a year for me to muster up the courage to re-take it. And, I thank God that my employer provided professional development funds to help with the thousands of dollars associated with trying to prepare for the exam. Nonetheless, there are many individuals that do not have the financial support to get additional help in preparing for this test. For me, none of the preparatory workshops and tutorials worked on their own. I failed again and again. It was not until I embodied a 'double consciousness' in studying and taking the exam to pass it. I do not feel triumphant because I know many other black professionals that are just as capable of providing mental health services to people in our community

that are 'left behind'. The bottom line is that the pass rates of the ASWB exam show inequities and therefore personify an injustice for many black professionals that have been excluded from joining the ranks of licensed clinicians as a result of failing a racially biased exam.

I sincerely hope that the committee will consider passage of these important bills.

Thank you for your time.

Recommended Amendment to Ensure Parity in Reimbursement for Temporarily Licensed Professionals

We respectfully request that the bill mandate that:

- Social workers who obtain a temporary license under this legislation be reimbursed at the same rates as social workers with a permanent license
- Employers, insurers and entities not discriminate in hiring or reimbursement of temporarily licensed social workers under this legislation.

Without these protections, there is danger of exacerbating inequities in the workforce through discriminatory hiring practices and needless differential treatment. However, given the dire need to take immediate action to rectify the harms caused by the bills, we also need this legislation in its entirety.

SB 872 Will Help in Eliminating these Inequities

As SB 872 contemplates, we support the elimination of the entry-level exams² and replacement of the clinical level exam.³ Ultimately we need a more culturally competent test. However, it is clear we can no longer administer this racially biased examination as it stands. We strongly urge a favorable report on SB 872.

Health Care for the Homeless is Maryland's leading provider of integrated health services and supportive housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. We deliver medical care, mental health services, state-certified addiction treatment, dental care, social services, housing support services, and housing for over 10,000 Marylanders annually at sites in Baltimore City and Baltimore County.

Our Vision: Everyone is healthy and has a safe home in a just and respectful community.

Our Mission: We work to end homelessness through racially equitable health care, housing and advocacy in partnership with those of us who have experienced it. For more information, visit www.hchmd.org.

² CSWE* and University leaders: graduates from accredited Bachelors and Masters programs are qualified to be licensed at their respective levels for supervised practice.

³ An effective human-centered, practice-based assessment process should be developed to screen for competence and safety for independent practice.

Mouny SWEAR Testimony--March 10, 2023.pdf

Uploaded by: Judith Mouny

Position: FAV

Mouny Testimony

For Hearing, March 10, 2023

My name is Dr. Judy Mouny. I am a deaf licensed clinical social worker in private practice in Maryland and a Board of Social Work Examiners (BSWE)-approved supervisor. I am testifying in support of bills S.B. 871 and S.B. 872, which provide for temporary licensing and a moratorium on using examinations in the licensing process for social workers.

States across the country are grappling with the profoundly discriminatory impact of biased licensing examinations. This issue has deprived Maryland of more than 1,200 committed and competent mental health providers, including people of color, older candidates, nonnative speakers of English, and deaf and hard of hearing individuals. Failing the licensing examination puts an undue financial and personal burden on these skilled professionals, many of whom have spent thousands of dollars in their attempts to pass, and who often work in lower income jobs because of their lack of a license. Importantly, while the examinations clearly create undue barriers to licensure disproportionately affecting these applicants, in over 40 years of examination history, there is no evidence to show that the examination effectively assesses the quality or safety of social work practice.

As with social workers from other disproportionately affected communities, deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind social workers provide an essential cultural connection. Deaf and hard of hearing people need social workers who are bilingual in American Sign Language and English and who share their lived experiences.

The United States Census Bureau estimates that there are 5,976,407 individuals living in Maryland. Based on the finding of a study conducted by Johns Hopkins University, it is estimated that there are approximately 1.2 million Marylanders aged 12 years or older who are

deaf or hard of hearing in at least one ear, and 759,000 Marylanders aged 12 years or older who are deaf or hard of hearing in both ears. These numbers are extrapolated from the Johns Hopkins study's findings and the U.S. Census Bureau's data.

For many deaf and hard of hearing candidates, the linguistic structure of the test items (problematic from the outset because this population has a different experience acquiring and accessing English) and cultural bias of the examination has profoundly impacted access to licensure, employment, ability to serve their population, and advancement in their profession. The issues for deaf and hard of hearing graduates of social work programs are poignantly illuminated in a 2010 article in the *Journal of Social Work in Disability and Rehabilitation* by Dr. Martha Sheridan, Dr. Barbara J. White, and myself titled [“Deaf and Hard of Hearing Social Workers Accessing Their Profession: A Call to Action”](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15367100903524091) (<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15367100903524091>).

The passage of S.B. 871 and S.B. 872 would allow otherwise qualified social workers to enter and advance practice, while the state develops an alternative practice-based assessment, increasing equity in the licensing process.

Over the course of my 40-plus years of professional experience across multiple disciplines, including psycholinguistics, education, educational research, and now social work, I have witnessed the devastating effects of not passing licensing and certification examinations on the careers and lives of deaf and hard of hearing professionals. For a period of time, I was a research scientist at Educational Testing Service (ETS), investigating why standardized tests are problematic for deaf and hard of hearing people and other populations, and what could be done about it. I co-authored *Assessing Deaf Adults: Critical Issues in Testing and Evaluation* (Gallaudet University Press, 2005), which includes a chapter focused on social work licensing

and discusses the results of a study of deaf and hard of hearing people with social work degrees and their efforts to become licensed

[\[https://gupress.gallaudet.edu/bookpage/ADABookpage.html\]](https://gupress.gallaudet.edu/bookpage/ADABookpage.html).

In 22 years at Gallaudet University, my service included being the Director of Field Education in the Department of Social Work for four years, and teaching a variety of social work courses. Additionally, I worked with Dr. Ellen Schaefer-Salins, currently Professor of Social Work at Salisbury University, to develop a special test preparation course for deaf and hard of hearing social work licensure candidates in the early 2000s. Gallaudet University has CSWE-accredited BSW and MSW programs. Social work is currently the number one major at the university. Hundreds of deaf and hard of hearing people have graduated from MSW programs at Gallaudet and other universities in the past two decades alone. Although there is no reliable data on the licensure status of deaf and hard of hearing individuals, anecdotally we know that a large percentage are not passing the test in Maryland and elsewhere. Some postpone or never take a licensing test out of profound fear of not passing.

Along with Dr. Barbara J. White, a now-retired deaf social worker and former chair of the Gallaudet Department of Social Work, I had several meetings and many communications with the chief executive officer of the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB), starting around 2000. We explained the nature of the problem and asked for their support and assistance in collecting data and addressing the issues. The interest was there but there were concerns about cost, given the relatively small size of our community. Also expressed were concerns about collecting and reporting data because of the ADA. ASWB invited me to give presentations several times. In 2004, my husband, Robert Weinstock, who had also worked at ETS and Gallaudet University, and I presented to a blue-ribbon committee of ASWB providing specific

guidance in reimagining test development. A similar presentation was made to ASWB in 2015. I have also expressed interest in becoming involved in the test development process, thus far to no avail.

These bills provide much-needed stop-gap solutions to a very pervasive issue for many populations. It is my hope that these bills will create opportunities for collaboration on equitable solutions and multiple pathways to licensure.

Judith L. Mounty, Ed.D., MSW, LCSW-C

Takoma Park, Maryland

MGA March 9 2023.pdf

Uploaded by: Kyle Berkley

Position: FAV

Good afternoon, my name is Dr. Kyle S. Berkeley and I'm a licensed Masters Level Social Worker. I hope my words please the Maryland General Assembly. I have worked in this field of Social Work since 2009. During my career, I have only worked with 3 African American males with LCSW-C status, one of the males has taken on the role of CEO of the NASW. Sadly, the \$260 exam has become a gatekeeper for people like me to advance in this field. Before the ASWB released the data, proving a disproportionate pass-fail ratio for African Americans passing the exam, I wrote the previous Executive Director of the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners. Dr. Weinstien denied the board having data, dismissed the disparity, and blamed schools like Coppin for the disparity. I have the email chain. In my field of expertise, I work with the homeless and many times the most psychotic clients. Yet, with my training, and expertise, I can only amass entry-level pay due to my licensure. I also have to pay \$260 each time I take the exam. To further paint a picture of my world, I'm a married father of 3, and my youngest is special needs. I have paid thousands of dollars in training for organizations like LEAP, Phil in the Gaps, AGPAR, Therapist Development Center, and Social Work Solutions, only to watch my white colleagues, that used the same services, pass the exam and move up while I fail by a few points and continue to make entry-level pay. I have missed out on promotions, advancement in pay, and being able to provide for my family. I have attempted to pass this exam since 2019. I have experienced emotional and spiritual breakdowns due to this exam. I have also trained and educated the colleagues that passed the exam, on the first try, how to work with the clients that I am most qualified to work with. I have had supervisors and directors express concern, and attended meetings with the Maryland Board of Social Work to express echoing sentiments. If states like Illinois can pass legislation to support the profession and the communities we serve, Maryland should not be on the wrong side of history. Mental Health is an important field, serving the homeless, the youth, the disabled, veterans, substance abusers, African Americans, Asian Americans, Latin X, European Americans, the LGBTQ Plus community, returning citizens, inmates, and many more. We have experienced a pandemic, a recession, and inflation. I serve the people affected by what we have experienced. We should be growing the profession to serve, not gatekeeping with systematic practices that have been harmful to our people for generations.

Testimony from Lisa Kays on SB871 and SB872-2.pdf

Uploaded by: Lisa Kays

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony from Lisa Kays, LICSW, LCSW-C, LCSW regarding SB0871 and 0872
FAVORABLE WITH THE WORKGROUP AMENDMENT**

I am writing as a licensed clinical social worker in the state of Maryland (LCSW-C) and a consumer of mental health services, particularly for my sons (age 7 and 4) in Maryland, to urge your support of the following bills recently introduced by Representative Mary Washington.

[SB0871](#)-Title: Social Workers - Licensure Examinations - Moratorium and Workgroup

[SB0872](#)-Title: State Board of Social Work Examiners - Temporary License to Practice Social Work

These bills seek to allay the harm being done by the multi-level licensure exam in my profession, which has been demonstrated to pose significant racial bias towards my colleagues of color. We are currently the only profession that requires 3 levels of exams and at each level, my colleagues of color, as well as deaf and older colleagues, pay and labor to complete degrees and then are unable to use them because the exam's bias makes it impossible for them to pass these exams. As a clinical supervisor, I have witnessed this firsthand with supervisees, whom would immediately benefit from the relief provided in these bills.

In addition to my colleagues, this exam, and the ASWB's gaslighting and abject refusal to acknowledge the harm the exam does and to rectify it, not only harm the social workers who invest in a career and then face severe financial penalty when they can't access independent licensure, but it poses significant workforce issues when patients and people served in social work agencies can't be treated and served by someone who looks like and has the same lived experience as they do.

Additionally, I have recently noticed that when I go to look for therapists of a certain modality requiring advanced skills and training, such as IFS or somatic experiencing, both evidence-based treatments providing high levels of symptom relief quite quickly to people, most all of those certified are white. While this isn't solely due to the biased exam, it speaks to a systemic issue within our profession where people of color cannot advance due to these financial, emotional and logistical barriers, and then, even if they do, are left so financially encumbered that they likely can't pay for these higher levels of training. It is highly problematic for a profession that serves so many people of color to be so white and this exam is contributing extensively to that problem.

I can also say as a licensed social worker who is white and passed all of these exams the first time that the exams are absurd. Absurd. I feel experientially and the data supports that they contribute nothing to "public safety" as the ASWB likes to tout, are extremely cut off from the actual skills, ethics and knowledge social workers need, and are an arbitrary waste of time that contribute nothing to our profession or the safety of those it serves. It is my experience as a student, supervisee, and now, supervisor, of social work that the course work and intensive supervision we receive in order to achieve clinical licensure are the factors that truly contribute

to ethical and competent practice and provide more than enough guardrails to ensure that practitioners are serving the public well. The exam is nothing but a meaningless obstacle with no bearing on competence.

You will find that many programs that help people of color "study" for the exam are literally saying to them a version of, "You just have to learn to think like a white woman" and that is the "skill" being taught openly and often that helps individuals pass. It sounds like I may be making this up, but I assure you, I am not. I have heard it repeatedly.

I have a specific supervisee who has suffered immensely under these exams, who is seeking licensure in MD. She is bi-lingual, an immigrant, and serves children, a population in dire need of clinical professionals currently. In terms of clinicians needed skills right now, she is a unicorn. I can't get my own son a therapist currently, and he's on numerous waitlists, much less a *Spanish-speaking bilingual therapist*. She has failed the exam 7 times, often by 1 point only, despite her being a very talented, skilled and highly ethical social worker. She has endured extraordinary financial hardship as a result, and faced a career setback of over a decade. She wonders if she should give up and leave the profession, and I don't blame her, or, quite frankly, counsel her otherwise. Given how few points she fails the exam by, it is impossible to not wonder if the exam questions she fails are ones ASWB later finds are biased—but yet does nothing about. She has written ASWB to ask for a remedy, and their response is basically to critique her study skills. This legislation would provide immediate relief to people in her situation, allowing them to achieve licensure and to serve people in our communities who very much need care.

I will add that I recently attended the ASWB "Community Conversations" about the exam and none of the social workers in my focus group, a sampling from across the United States, expressed any appreciation for or validity to the objectives of the exam as related to public safety. None see it as important or think it effectively screens out good or bad social workers, in any way. The consensus was that it assesses the capacity to take a standardized test—which has nothing to do with actual social work practice or skill.

I hope you will consult with many social workers and look at the workforce data in Maryland surrounding our profession, and really talk with social workers about how this exam has affected their colleagues and how they feel it serves the profession in deciding if you'll support these bills, and I hope that in the end you'll take the anti-racist action of alleviating much of the harm caused by these exams to the greatest extent possible in Maryland.

I am happy to talk further or to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,
Lisa Kays
LCSW-C

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SB0872_CC_Klingenmaier_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Lisa Klingenmaier

Position: FAV



SB 872

State Board of Social Work Examiners – Temporary License to Practice Social Work

Senate Finance Committee

March 10, 2023

Support

Catholic Charities of Baltimore supports SB 872, which authorizes the State Board of Social Work Examiners to issue a temporary license to practice master social work or certified social work-clinical to an applicant, who, expect for passing the required exam, has met the educational and experience requirements for licensure.

Inspired by the Gospel to love, serve and teach, Catholic Charities provides care and services to improve the lives of Marylanders in need. For 100 years, Catholic Charities has accompanied Marylanders as they age with dignity, obtain empowering careers, heal from trauma and addiction, achieve economic independence, prepare for educational success and feel welcome as immigrant neighbors. As the largest human service provider in Maryland we employ hundreds of social workers, and we recognize the importance of having a robust and diverse workforce.

Behavioral health providers, like Catholic Charities, have experienced a significant and unprecedented workforce crisis. The obstacles to hire social workers due to a national shortage were significant prior to 2020, and this challenge became even more compounded as a result of the pandemic. Unfortunately, thousands of social workers who have completed their degree programs are missing from the Maryland workforce due to the licensure examination process. The reduction in our state's social work capacity due to struggles with the licensure exam subsequently hinders clinical services to our youth, families and communities. Thus, granting social workers temporarily licensure while the state undergoes the critical work necessary to develop an alternative assessment is paramount in maintaining and building our workforce.

We want a workforce that is representative of the Marylanders we serve in our programs and the ability to uplift lived experience as a critically valuable expertise: two goals that are stifled by the current social work licensure exams. There are massive and alarming racial disparities in the passage rate of the LMSW and LCSW-C licensure exams, meaning thousands of social workers are left out the workforce who – besides passing a biased exam – have all the experience, training, and skills needed to practice social work. Additionally, the racial disparities in passage means – as an agency – we struggle to find social workers who share the same identities as the families and individuals we serve, which is a massive disservice to our clients, communities, and our state. For instance, we have long struggled to hire Spanish-speaking social workers at the Esperanza Center, and the disparities in exam passage for who test takers whose first language isn't English directly contribute to this challenge.

SB 872 allows social workers to begin practicing after graduating from accredited programs, expanding our workforce while the state reviews the current licensure examination process. SB 872 recognizes that agencies, the social work profession, and Maryland overall benefits when we can create a more diverse network of social workers. Issuing temporarily licenses to social workers is a critical step in the effort to develop a social work assessment that does not perpetuate inequality and discrimination.

For the reasons listed above, Catholic Charities of Baltimore appreciates your consideration, and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for SB 872.

Submitted By: Lisa Klingenmaier, Assistant Director of Advocacy

SB871 and SB872.pdf

Uploaded by: Lynda Davis

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am a Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical (LCSW-C). I am urging you to support SB 0872 and SB0871 with an amendment that would make the exam continue to be available to applicants on an optional basis.

These bills provide temporary licensing and a moratorium on using exams in the licensing process for social workers. States across the country are grappling with the profoundly discriminatory impact of biased licensing exams that have deprived Maryland of more than 1200 committed and competent mental health providers, specifically those of color, older, or foreign language speakers.

Failing the test puts an undue financial and personal burden on these skilled professionals. Many have spent thousands of dollars in their attempts to pass, while working in lower income jobs because of the lack of a license.

While the exams clearly create undue barriers to licensure disproportionately affecting applicants of color, in over 40 years of exam history, there is no evidence that the exam effectively assesses quality or safety of social work practice.

These two bills allow otherwise qualified social workers to enter and advance practice, while the State develops an alternative practice-based assessment for licensing.

Neither of these bills ends social work licensure. Even without exams, there are substantial requirements for licensure, including graduation from a nationally accredited school—which includes hundreds of supervised hours of fieldwork, thousands of hours of supervised practice, and a background check. This is a sufficient baseline to ensure that social workers are prepared to practice safely and equitably.

As a white social worker, I passed the exam on the first go-round. I believe it was my race that privileged me in regard to the exam and that this does not make me a “better” social worker. My former colleague who is African American did not pass the exam on the first go-round. However, I believe she was and still is a much more competent and skilled Social Worker than I am.

Most importantly, the exams deny Marylanders the help they deserve, especially in communities of color where the need is growing and where cultural connection to clients is essential. Over a thousand social workers are missing from Maryland’s workforce. If all test-takers passed at the same rate as white test-takers from 2011 to 2021, we would have 1227 more licensed social workers in Maryland (see: [Association of Social Work Boards exam pass rates by state/province](#)).

We cannot continue to allow this exam to keep competent, compassionate social workers from serving those in need. The alarming outcome disparities, along with ongoing issues of validity, prove that the exams are needlessly perpetuating inequality,

keeping social workers from making a living and advancing in their profession and keeping the community from getting vital services.

It is for all of these reasons that I urge you to pass SB 0872 and SB0871 with an amendment that would make the exam continue to be available to applicants on an optional basis.

Sincerely,

Lynda Davis, LCSW-C
Linthicum, MD

testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Lynn Panepinto

Position: FAV

Good afternoon,

I am submitting written testimony **in support of both SB0871 (with the amendment of the more diversified workgroup) and SB0872**. These bills address the well-documented exam bias in social work licensing exams, which disproportionately and unjustly affects social workers with marginalized identities. As a licensed social worker in Maryland, a member of the National Association of Social Workers- Maryland Chapter, and a supporter of Social Workers for Equity and Anti-Racism, I urge the members of the Senate Finance Committee to join me and many others in supporting these bills.

For the past decade and a half, I have worked in various parts of the United States with survivors of violence and trauma, and it has become clear to me that systemic violence, such as inequity and racism, is at the root of many people's trauma. Not only have I witnessed the effects of inequity and racism among clients, but I have also seen examples of this within the field of social work. I have talked with social workers who, despite their social work acumen and expertise, struggle to pass the licensing exam and/or pay inordinate amounts of money to become licensed. I must note that these social work colleagues have all been women of color whose first language is Spanish; in my work as a bilingual social worker, I have seen firsthand how the dearth of bilingual social workers drastically affects service delivery in Maryland. I have felt outraged at the way in which the licensing process stalls and deters excellent candidates from becoming social workers, when we are well aware that there is a mental health crisis and we need more social workers, particularly those with diverse lived experiences and linguistic skills. The status quo is unacceptable, and change is long overdue.

I am very hopeful that these recently introduced bills can move our field forward and bring more of the change that many of us are ready for and working hard to see. Please support SB0871 and SB0872. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Lynn Panepinto, LCSW-C
902 Andover Road
Baltimore, MD 21218

Testimony March 10, 23 for SB 871 & 872.pdf

Uploaded by: Mary C. Slicher

Position: FAV



3601 Old Frederick Road
Baltimore, MD 21229
(410) 837-1400
www.projectplase.org

To: Honorable Senator Mary Washington

March 6, 2023

Finance committee members

From: Mary C. Slicher, LCSW-C

Executive Director

Project PLASE, Inc.

(People Lacking Ample Shelter & Employment)

Re: Testimony in favor of SB 871 and SB 872

This testimony comes in support of SB 871 and SB 871. I thank Senator Mary Washington for her initiative in introducing these measures.

I am the Executive Director of Project PLASE, Inc. (People Lacking Ample Shelter & Employment), a charitable housing and service organization with 49 years of serving unhoused individuals and families in the Baltimore City and County areas.

I also am a Licensed Certified Social Worker- Clinical (LCSW-C) and am very proud of my degree, license, and profession. I see Social Work as a noble profession personifying equity and justice in its passion and work on behalf of individuals as well as society. My work has been literally life-saving for the individual or family but also creates equity on a community-basis and does so in quiet, effective, and persistent ways.

Hence, the inequity at the door, the portal that is not allowing other trained social workers to claim that title via a license is of concern to me.

These 2 bills will explore other ways to assure qualified persons, who are not good test takers or most likely are hurt and hampered by the bias built into these tests, can qualify officially. It is key that MSW (Master Level Social Workers) are considered fairly and allowed into this valuable profession at a time when their work in society is needed more than ever.

Hence, I support these two bills and their efforts to explore other ways to measure competency and also grant one year's licensure during this process for the following reasons:

- 1) I am an Executive Director with 13 Master Level Social workers, all African Americans on staff who do not have their licenses because of difficulty with the tests. This is true despite the fact that they have successfully achieved academic and clinical studies resulting in completed master's degrees, internships, and qualified experience.

Despite this lack of license, they are serving capability in the roles of Case Managers, Health Navigators, Shelter managers, administrators, and more—but not as Social workers.



This limits their perceived qualifications and next steps, but not their abilities.

- 2) I feel there is definitely a racial element in this, not only through my and PLASE'S experiences but also the research indicates state-wide. This goes against the equity value and goal of the profession itself. I support having congruency between the means and the ends or goals.
- 3) The effect and reach of this are beyond the immediate.

What I mean by this is that -----

Without this licensure, the profession does not allow these individuals to serve as supervisors and mentors, teachers of both Social work interns as well as master-trained social workers, themselves acquiring the required supervision for licensure, to even qualify to take the test. Hence the life and professional experience of these, largely African American individuals are not incorporated into the supervisor-supervisee relationship and learning exchange. These missed opportunities and experiences are not passed on and formulated, or integrated into the work of these budding social workers. I only wonder if this is one way that bias is furthered. Their life experiences and training and supervisory perspective would shape the next generation of social workers, in ways that I as a white female could not, despite all desires. My life experiences do not reflect their same life experiences.

- 4) Having Licensed Social workers who reflect the populations in need in certain areas of work is crucial. PLASE's population is 75-85 % African American, for example.
- 5) Further this discrepancy has limited the ability to hire Licensed Social workers and has contributed to a perceived deficit where there are many trained persons who could qualify, with an alternative way to measure and assure their entrance into this profession, hence and then be allowed to offer effective, ethical supportive social work.

I thank you in advance for your time and interest, and passage of these bills.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or interest to talk further.

I can be reached at MSLICHER@PROJECTPLASE.ORG, 410. 837. 1400, EXT. 111 OR 443.980-0626

Sincerely,



Mary C. Slicher

Executive Director

Project PLASE, Inc.

People Lacking Ample Shelter & Employment

3601 Old Frederick Road

Baltimore, Md. 21229

CC: Finance Committee:
Melony G. Griffith, Chair

Katherine A. Klausmeier, Vice-Chair

Pamela G. Beidle

Arthur C. Ellis

Dawn D. Gile

Antonio L. Hayes

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MDAD SB 872 – State Board of Social Work Examiners

Uploaded by: MDAD President MDAD President

Position: FAV



**Maryland Association of the Deaf
Written Testimony**

**SB 872 – State Board of Social Work Examiners - Temporary License to
Practice Social Work
Friday, March 10, 2023
Position: Favorable**

President

Kirsten Poston

Vice President

Tina Joyner

Secretary

Jacob Leffler

Treasurer

Board Members

Vikki Porter

Toyin Fasakin

Tisha Bera

Blaise Delahoussaye

Angela Rogers

Peter Un

The Maryland Association of the Deaf (MDAD) is a statewide organization that protects the interests of Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Marylanders regarding accessibility and equality issues. We are advocating for the passage of SB 872 sponsored by Senate Mary Washington regarding State Board of Social Work Examiners - Temporary License to Practice Social Work. There are approximately 1.2 million Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing individuals living in the State of Maryland.

There are not enough Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Licensed Social Workers serving in our community and meeting our needs. This is a great concern of MDAD in that we seek direct communication in American Sign Language with behavioral health providers.

Due to the shortage of Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Licensed Social Workers, we should expand the pool of social workers with temporary licenses which this bill will provide. Oftentimes, we don't feel comfortable working with hearing social workers AND interpreters as third-party individuals. It is overwhelming when there are too many people in the room and confidentiality can be a concern as well. Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Social Workers can be more empathic because they live and breathe in our community and use American Sign Language without having a third party involved.

With this bill, it will solve these issues and create more opportunities for Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Social Workers to practice in the State of Maryland and be able to serve to serve the 1.2 million Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing people living in the State.

We look forward to a favorable outcome of bill SB 872.

MDAD Board of Directors

Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Philicia Ross

Position: FAV

Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Philicia Ross, I am a LMSW and I live in district 23. I fully support bills SB871(with the amendment of the workgroup, keeping the moratorium in place) and SB872 and am asking for the Committee members to vote favorable. I graduated with my Masters of Social Work in 2019 and in this short period of time can attest to the great harm I have gone through as a result of having the barrier of the exam. For the first year of my social work journey I was trying to find work. This was perplexing to me because of the amount of work I had done to graduate. By the time I was awarded my Masters, I had already completed 2 years of internship by a Clinically trained board certified social worker for a CSWE approved internship program. I did this internship work for no pay, utilizing my own resources and familial support systems. My dismay came when I realized I was denied paid work because I could not pass a licensure exam. Not because I wasn't qualified in education, after all I passed a CSWE approved program. Not due to lack of passing a background check. Not even being disapproved of by my Clinical supervisor, only an exam.

This exam did not reflect any of my experiences as a competent social worker nor test on accurate details of what I would actually do as a social worker. The hundreds of dollars and hours I spent in my higher learning was not enough to prepare for this exam, which the ASWB states to be a "measure of competency". Instead my education was geared towards actual, practical experience and the exam was geared towards measures of safety that were very clearly white washed, and in some cases culturally unethical. What I do as a black, queer, larger bodied, woman when I interact with someone who has similar experiences like me as a social worker was not represented in those questions. In fact, I was prepped to think "like a heterosexual white woman" which is incredibly harmful to the psyche and not a value that social work says it stands on in terms of diversity, inclusion, and social justice. In fact, the ASWB is a third party who states they stand on the same values of social work but has continued to pump harm into the field for capitalistic gain over the ethics that social work was founded on. As a member of the NASW I am disheartened that nothing has been done about this sooner.

I have noticed in other states like Illinois and California that not having an exam from the ASWB, and having equitable paths to licensure has increased social workers over 80% AND has helped eased the mental health and public health crisis for which social workers are often at the front lines of but never fully recognized for. These bills would be a gateway for Maryland social workers to be able to follow suit and ease a public and mental health crisis that we are seeing everywhere but very particularly in Maryland through substance use, lack of programs for our teens & youth to be engaged, and adults in the most marginalized of spaces. I hope that the Finance Committee stands on the side of the people, ALL people who represent this field, and not on the side of capitalistic gain that continues to aid the workforce shortage but continues to harm our most vulnerable populations.

Thank you,

Philicia Ross, LMSW

R Doyle SB871.872 written testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel Doyle

Position: FAV

To: Members of the Senate Finance Committee

From: Rachel Doyle, LICSW

Re: SB871 and SB872

Position: Favorable

Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

I am writing to you as a lifelong Maryland resident, a human services professional for almost 20 years, a social worker for over a decade, and a clinical supervisor for the past 5 years. **I urge you to support SB871 with the workgroup amendment and SB872.**

In August 2022, the Association of Social Work Boards, which writes social work licensing exams, [released data](#) showing what social workers already knew colloquially – these exams are biased and gatekeep talented BIPOC, older, and non-native English speakers out of our profession. **ASWB claims that their exams “protect the public” and assess for baseline competence and safety, but there is no proof behind these claims.** We as a nation are grappling with a mental health crisis brought on by Covid-19 and a workforce shortage. By keeping out talented social workers, ASWB exams are in fact harming the public, and they are harming our most vulnerable Maryland residents. Even the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) said on February 3, 2023, that [it opposes ASWB exams](#) because of the glaring pass rate disparities.

As a graduate of University of Maryland, Baltimore School of Social Work, I paid special attention to the [pass rate disparities](#) of my alma mater. The pass rate disparities are gaping for white social workers and Black social workers – from 2018-2021, there was a difference of 27.8% at the master’s level and 24.3% at the clinical level. Even though this is better than the national averages, it is still a large gap and disparities exist between white social workers and other racial groups as well. I am here to tell you that this is not an accurate reflection of the students I sat next to while I was in school. I learned a lot from my BIPOC colleagues, they were excellent future social workers, and it is a travesty that I was more likely to pass the exam simply due to my race.

Rather than use this data to reflect on their perpetuation of discrimination, ASWB has doubled down. They have not shown that they are willing to be collaborative partners to ensure that everyone who has otherwise completed rigorous social work requirements has equal opportunity to become a social worker. Therefore, the only solution is to pause the harm that the ASWB exam causes in the State of Maryland, then find a better path forward that does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, English language speaker status, or Deaf/Hard of Hearing status.

Some opponents of these measures worry about insurance reimbursement rates. This worry is not based in fact. Insurance companies are only concerned with licensure, not whether passing a test was part of licensure or not. When the ASWB exams were new, many social workers were exempted from taking the exams but still allowed to obtain full licensure. Some of these social workers are still in practice today. There is no evidence that they receive lower reimbursement rates or that their practice

is less competent or safe.

Others worry that eliminating the exams delegitimizes our profession. I speak for a large number of social workers when I say that I am not willing to throw my BIPOC, older, non-native English speakers, and Deaf/Hard of Hearing colleagues under the bus in the name of a test that provides artificial legitimacy to our profession. I do not know a single social worker who thinks these tests are a good measure of competence – at best, they are a silly and expensive hoop to jump through, and at worst, they keep great social workers out of our profession. We need to confront racism wherever we can; social work can be a pioneer, bringing greater legitimacy to our profession by eliminating these exams. Clients will see that we are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and they will be more comfortable coming to us because of it. For anyone who feels the exams are an important part of their own licensure path, there is nothing in the bill language that precludes social workers from taking ASWB exams.

There has been a lot of misinformation about Illinois, which has been a pioneer in reducing the influence of the ASWB in their state. The truth is that they had a surge of over 2,000 competent social workers when they dropped the master's level exam requirement, and there was no corresponding increase in complaints to their licensing board. The master's level initiative has been so successful that there is current legislation introduced to find a permanent non-exam path for clinical licensure. Maryland now has the opportunity to also be a pioneer in addressing ASWB's systemic discrimination.

SB871 and SB872 will allow us to immediately pause the harm of these discriminatory examinations. It will allow Maryland to address an enormous workforce shortage. It will give our talented BIPOC, older, non-native English speakers, and Deaf/Hard of Hearing social workers the opportunity to do what they do best – empower and serve Maryland residents. Then, we will have a diverse taskforce that will allow us to find a better assessment tool than harmful ASWB exams. Thank you for your favorable vote.

Sincerely,
Rachel Doyle, LICSW

Arrow SB872 testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Robert Basler

Position: FAV

Senate Bill 0872

State Board of Social Work Examiners-Temporary License to Practice Social Work

Finance Committee

March 10, 2023

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

I represent Arrow Child & Family Ministries, a multi-service non-profit that serves over 500 vulnerable youth and families in Maryland each year, some who have entered child welfare and others who are at risk of out-of-home placement.

Maryland is in the midst of two crises that put youth and families at risk: children's mental health and the hospital overstay and overall placement crisis. While each crisis has many contributing factors, a lack of qualified social workers is a driver of both. Many providers of services to youth, Arrow included, has seen the lack of qualified social workers negatively impact our ability to operate at full capacity. As a result, children and teens either stay in inappropriate placements or don't get needed services at all. The result is costly and damaging.

The current licensing process is both cumbersome and inequitable. This bill allows for qualified candidates to get a temporary license to practice if the only barrier is not passing the test.

We need a system that ensures that qualified candidates are not needlessly turned away from the profession. **Arrow Child & Family Ministries asks this committee to give SB0872 a favorable reading.**

SB872_SponsorAmendment

Uploaded by: Senator Mary Washington

Position: FAV



SB0872/943427/1

AMENDMENTS
PREPARED
BY THE
DEPT. OF LEGISLATIVE
SERVICES

09 MAR 23
14:21:30

BY: Senator M. Washington
(To be offered in the Finance Committee)

AMENDMENTS TO SENATE BILL 872
(First Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 1, in line 4, strike “authorizing” and substitute “requiring”; in line 6, after “requirements;” insert “prohibiting certain persons from disclosing whether a licensed social worker holds a temporary license; prohibiting an employer from refusing to hire an applicant who holds a temporary license solely on the basis that the applicant holds a temporary license;”; after line 6, insert:

“BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article - General Provisions

Section 4-333

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2019 Replacement Volume and 2022 Supplement)”;

in line 14, after “19–101(e)” insert “, 19–205, 19–306(a) and (b)(1).”; and in line 19, after “19–101(u)” insert “, 19–306(c).”.

AMENDMENT NO. 2

On page 1, after line 23, insert:

“Article – General Provisions

4–333.

(a) Subject to subsections (b) through (d) of this section, a custodian shall deny inspection of the part of a public record that contains information about the licensing of an individual in an occupation or a profession.

(b) [A] EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (F) OF THIS SECTION, A custodian shall allow inspection of the part of a public record that gives:

(1) the name of the licensee;

(2) the business address of the licensee or, if the business address is not available, the home address of the licensee after the custodian redacts any information that identifies the location as the home address of an individual with a disability as defined in § 20-701 of the State Government Article;

(3) the business telephone number of the licensee;

(4) the educational and occupational background of the licensee;

(5) the professional qualifications of the licensee;

(6) any orders and findings that result from formal disciplinary actions;

and

(7) any evidence that has been provided to the custodian to meet the requirements of a statute as to financial responsibility.

(c) [A] EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (F) OF THIS SECTION, A custodian may allow inspection of other information about a licensee if:

(1) the custodian finds a compelling public purpose; and

(2) the rules or regulations of the official custodian allow the inspection.

(d) Except as otherwise provided by this section or other law, a custodian shall allow inspection by the person in interest.

(e) A custodian who sells lists of licensees shall omit from the lists:

(1) the name of any licensee, on written request of the licensee; AND

(2) IF THE LIST CONTAINS LICENSEES WHO ARE LICENSED UNDER TITLE 19 OF THE HEALTH OCCUPATIONS ARTICLE, WHETHER A LICENSEE HOLDS A TEMPORARY LICENSE ISSUED UNDER § 19-309.1 OF THE HEALTH OCCUPATIONS ARTICLE.

(F) A CUSTODIAN MAY NOT ALLOW INSPECTION OF THE PART OF A PUBLIC RECORD THAT INDICATES WHETHER A LICENSEE WHO IS LICENSED UNDER TITLE 19 OF THE HEALTH OCCUPATIONS ARTICLE HOLDS A TEMPORARY LICENSE ISSUED UNDER § 19-309.1 OF THE HEALTH OCCUPATIONS ARTICLE.”.

On page 2, after line 13, insert:

“19-205.

(A) In addition to the powers and duties set forth elsewhere in this title, the Board has the following powers and duties:

(1) To adopt rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this title;

(2) To adopt a code of ethics;

(3) To adopt an official seal;

(4) To hold hearings and keep records and minutes necessary for the orderly conduct of business;

(Over)

(5) [To] SUBJECT TO SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION, TO issue a list annually of all currently licensed social workers and all social workers disciplined by the Board in the past year in accordance with § 4-333 of the General Provisions Article; and

(6) To investigate an alleged violation of this title.

(B) THE BOARD MAY NOT INCLUDE ON THE LIST ISSUED UNDER SUBSECTION (A) OF THIS SECTION WHETHER A LICENSED SOCIAL WORKER HOLDS A TEMPORARY LICENSE ISSUED UNDER § 19-309.1 OF THIS TITLE.

19-306.

(a) [The] SUBJECT TO SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION, THE Board shall maintain on its website a roster of all licensees who meet the requirements of this title.

(b) The Board shall include on each electronic license record:

(1) [The] SUBJECT TO SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION, THE category of license;

(C) THE BOARD MAY NOT INCLUDE IN THE ROSTER MAINTAINED UNDER SUBSECTION (A) OF THIS SECTION OR ON AN ELECTRONIC LICENSE RECORD UNDER SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION WHETHER A LICENSED SOCIAL WORKER HOLDS A TEMPORARY LICENSE ISSUED UNDER § 19-309.1 OF THIS TITLE.”;

in line 15, strike “MAY” and substitute “SHALL”; after line 25, insert:

“(C) (1) THIS SUBSECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO A HOLDER OF A TEMPORARY LICENSE ISSUED UNDER THIS SECTION.

(2) A PERSON MAY NOT DISCLOSE WHETHER A LICENSEE HOLDS A TEMPORARY LICENSE ISSUED UNDER THIS SECTION.

(D) AN EMPLOYER MAY NOT REFUSE TO HIRE AN APPLICANT WHO HOLDS A TEMPORARY LICENSE SOLELY ON THE BASIS THAT THE APPLICANT HAS A TEMPORARY LICENSE.”;

and in line 26, strike “(C)” and substitute “**(E)**”.

Pressley Ridge _SB871_872_ Written Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Simone Bramble

Position: FAV

March 9, 2023

The Honorable Chairwoman Melony Griffith
The Senate Finance Committee

RE: SB871 – Social Workers – Licensure Examinations – Moratorium and Workgroup AND
SB872 – State Board of Social Work Examiners – Temporary License to Practice Social Work
Position: SUPPORT

Dear Madam Chair Griffith, Madam Vice-Chair Klausmeier, and esteemed Members of the Senate Finance Committee, I am writing to express support for SB871 and SB872.

Pressley Ridge serves some of the state’s most vulnerable youth and young adults. Each year nearly 8,000 children and families are strengthened primarily through services provided in their homes and community and, if needed, in an out-of-home setting. Pressley Ridge provides individuals and families with hope and support through life’s challenges. We pride ourselves on partnering with families and meeting them where they are, when they need it most.

Since 1988, Pressley Ridge has been a leader in foster care and community-based mental health services in Maryland. In recent years, we have also added supportive services for transition-age youth, including workforce development and independent living programs.

Our mission to do whatever it takes to create success for children and families requires that we be in a state of constant readiness, with the workforce to do so. We employ licensed social workers to provide critical case management, behavioral health, and therapeutic services to meet the needs of children, youth, and families. The current delays at the Board of Social Work Examiners to process applications for licensure severely limits our ability and capacity to meet those needs. Private providers like Pressley Ridge are bound by a set of regulations that limits the number of children and youth a social worker can serve in our Treatment Foster Care and Independent Living programs, thereby hampering our efforts to support the state in placing youth in these programs. In the last year we have capped admissions to our programs due to the shortage of licensed social workers. Other like providers across the state have had to do the same, resulting in fewer home settings for youth.

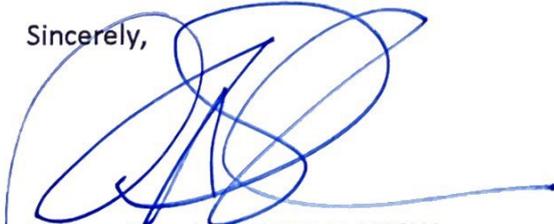
SB872 will allow providers the opportunity to hire an applicant who has completed his or her required academic work, field education experience, passed the requisite background clearance and are simply waiting to take the licensing exam. Once hired, the employee will work under the supervision of a Licensed Certified Social Worker – Clinical (LCSW-C). This bill can be a tool for the Board of Social Work Examiners to eliminate delays and bottlenecks in the licensing process.

Last year, the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) published data that highlighted disparities in the exam pass rates for different demographic groups. SB 871 seeks to responsibly study the contexts in which these disparities exist. In an effort to measure competency, social structural tools, like the social work exam, negates the lived experiences of its test takers and fail to recognize realities of marginalized communities.

A workgroup can provide critical analysis and transformation of the exam structure, ensuring that the perpetuation of power structures that advance and protect privilege, cease to exist, or at least are diminished. SB871 can transform patterns of social privilege and honor the profession's commitment to social change and social justice.

We at Pressley Ridge encourage a favorable report on SB871 and SB872. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Simone Bramble, LCSW-C, LICSW
Executive Director

Bill Response - SB872.pdf

Uploaded by: Stacey Benn

Position: FAV



Office of the President

**Morgan State University Testimony
Dr. David Wilson, President**

Senate Bill 872 (Senator Washington)

State Board of Social Work Examiners - Temporary License to Practice Social Work

Committee: Finance Committee

March 10, 2023

Favorable

Chair Griffith, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and members of the Finance Committee. We, at Morgan, thank you for the opportunity to share our position on Senate Bill 872. The summary of the Bill states the following: *Authorizing the State Board of Social Work Examiners to issue a temporary license to practice social work to an applicant who, except for passing an examination otherwise required under law, has met the appropriate education and experience requirements for a license issued to practice master social work or certified social work-clinical.*

Morgan State University is the premier public urban research university in Maryland, known for its excellence in teaching, intensive research, effective public service and community engagement. Morgan prepares diverse and competitive graduates for success in a global interdependent society.

Morgan State supports Senate Bill 872.

Given the increased need for social work professionals and to address issues of equity in the labor force, Morgan State University calls upon the state legislature and licensing board to implement the following action steps to determine an equitable solution to the disparate pass rates among Black and African American test takers.

- Declare a 2-year moratorium on the administration of the ASWB exam to examine the demographic and psychometric properties of the test associated with the disparities in pass rates;
- Issue Temporary Licenses during the 2-year moratorium period
- Increase access to all examination preparation resources by offering material at low to no cost;
- Eliminate test retake fee;

- Allow test takers to retake only the sections of the exam they did not pass;
- Provide feedback to test takers on the question and areas they did not pass; and
- Engage in restorative measures to compensate test-takers who have taken the test repeatedly.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported that social work employment is projected to grow 9 percent from 2021 to 2023, with almost 75,000 positions open yearly. Morgan State University School of Social Work ranks 14th nationally in graduating Black and African American MSW students. The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) has continually accredited the department since 1975, whose accreditation extended to its MSW program, founded in 2007. Our students meet the criteria for graduation as required by our professional accreditation body, CSWE. Yet despite achieving the necessary professional competency, our students disproportionately enter the profession at a lower rung than their white counterparts who have passed the required licensing exam. This professional and economic trajectory follows them through their professional lives despite eventually passing the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) exam.

Despite claims of being statistically free of race and gender bias, in August 2022, the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) released its demographic data revealing profound disparities among pass rates for first-time pass rates of the ASWB clinical licensure exam among Black and African American, Latino and Indigenous test takers when compared to their white counterparts. At 45%, less than half of Black and African American first-time test takers passed, in stark contrast to their White counterparts, 84% of whom passed on their first attempt.

Citing literature on the outcome of other professional licensure tests, ASWB posited that the reasons for disparities in test outcomes ranged from systemic issues, e.g., household income, poverty rates, and access to exam preparation resources, to individual issues such as stereotype threat – fears that performance on a task may confirm or reinforce preexisting negative stereotypes. Further, despite reporting the number of social workers who eventually passed the licensing exam, ASWB did not report the number of times a test taker took the exam before passing, nor did the organization report the cumulative cost of each attempt.

In response to these findings, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), the National Association of Deans and Directors of Social Work Programs, (NADD), and the Clinical Social Work Association (CSWA) have issued statements. Each organization has called for reform, which includes deeper analyses of the outcome data and the test - its construction and validity.

These examinations continue to negatively impact the career trajectories of Black social workers at a time when the need for these practitioners in Maryland and nationally is dire. Senator Mary Washington has introduced SB872 in an effort to address these issues in line with several of our recommendations. We are prepared to provide oral testimony when this bill is brought forward for public comment.

Because of the positive considerations of SB872, Morgan supports this bill.

Respectfully Submitted,



Dr. David K. Wilson
President, Morgan State University

senatebill.pdf

Uploaded by: Steven Acerno

Position: FAV

March 9, 2023

Senate Bill 0872

State Board of Social Work Examiners - Temporary License to Practice Social Work

Position: FAVORABLE

I am Steven Acerno, Director of the Treatment Foster Care program at The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region and current chair of The Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY). MARFY is an association of private child caring organizations providing foster care, group homes, and other services through more than 200 programs across Maryland. The members of MARFY represent providers who serve Maryland's most vulnerable children who are in the foster care system due to abuse, neglect, severe mental health issues, and complex medical needs. The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region's Treatment Foster care Program serves youth with emotional/behavioral issues, medically fragile youth as well as teen mothers.

The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region foster care program employs licensed social workers to provide case management and clinical services to these children and their families. Currently, there is a shortage of licensed social workers throughout the state of Maryland. This shortage directly and drastically impacts the number of children and families which the provider community is capable of serving. Private programs in the state have regulatory limits on the caseload size of social workers. The inability to fill positions results in fewer youth receiving care. In this time when we have a shortage of placement options for children in foster care, we need practical and immediate solutions to ensure that qualified individuals are available to enter the workforce.

Individuals who enter the social work field enter it because they have a passion to help those in need, for social justice, and to advocate for those who do not have a voice. The state of Maryland is experiencing a workforce crisis related to social workers entering the field, and it is imperative that we make it possible for these individuals to do the good work they are trained for as soon as possible.

The provider community is committed to a multi-disciplinary approach to alleviating this workforce crisis. The passage of this bill will help to remove the first barrier to

our ability to meet this exponentially growing need. It is for these reasons that I respectfully ask for a FAVORABLE report on Senate Bill 0872. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Steve Acerno", followed by the text "LCSW-C" in a simpler, possibly typed or printed font.

Steve Acerno, LCSW-C

For more information call or email: Therese M. Hessler | 301-503-2576 |
therese@ashlargr.com

SB872_MARFY_SUPPORT.pdf

Uploaded by: Therese Hessler

Position: FAV



March 10, 2023

**Senate Bill 872
State Board of Social Work Examiners – Temporary License to Practice Social Work
Senate Finance Committee**

Position: SUPPORT

The Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY) is an association of private child caring organizations providing foster care, group homes, and other services through more than 200 programs across Maryland. The members of MARFY represent providers who serve Maryland's most vulnerable children who are in out of home placements due to abuse, neglect or severe mental health, and medical needs. We operate group homes, treatment foster care programs and independent living programs, primarily serving the foster care population as well as a juvenile services population.

If passed, Senate Bill 872 would authorize the State Board of Social Work Examiners to issue a temporary license to practice master social work or certified social work-clinical to an applicant who, except for passing the required examination, has met the appropriate education and experience requirements for licensure. A temporary license is valid until the earlier of (1) notification of permanent licensure or (2) two years after the date on which the temporary license was issued, with specified exceptions for renewal. A temporary license authorizes the holder to practice social work only within the scope of the specific category of license issued while the temporary license is effective.

Private providers experienced significant obstacles prior to COVID-19 as it pertained to hiring social workers due to an identified national shortage; and this challenge has become more compounded as a result of the pandemic in combination with other unforeseen events such as malware attacks on State websites and administrative delays in processing applications. The delay in a graduate's ability to sit for their exam to obtain their licensure considerably impedes employer's capacity to offer employment subsequently hindering clinical services that our youth, families, and communities require. Due to the current unprecedented hindrances, it took many agencies over 10 months to fill social worker positions in some group homes over the past two-years.

As worker challenges continue, the state of our current mental health needs as it pertains to caring for our most vulnerable populations far exceeds anything MARFY members have ever witnessed. We strongly advocate for modifications to current practices be considered to align with our existing barriers for the mental well-being and safety of our youth, families, and communities. Allowing this bill to pass would provide an opportunity to amend the current statutes to meet the rising needs of our community.

It is for these reasons we politely ask for a favorable report on Senate Bill 872.

For more information call or email:

Therese M. Hessler | 301-503-2576 | therese@ashlargr.com

VR Written Testimony SB0871 and SB0872.pdf

Uploaded by: Victoria Rodriguez

Position: FAV

Dear Senators,

As a seasoned Social Worker with a preventive case management, therapeutic and leadership/management background, I am writing this to request your support for **SB0871 and SB0872**, which provides temporary licensing and a moratorium on using exams in the licensing process for Social Workers. States across the country are grappling with the profoundly discriminatory impact of biased licensing exams that have deprived Maryland of more than 1200 committed and competent mental health providers, specifically those of color, older, or global language speakers. Failing the test puts an undue financial and personal burden on these skilled professionals.

Also, the exams deny Marylanders the help they deserve, especially in communities of color where the need is growing. We must remove the undue barriers to their licensure. In over 40 years of exam history, **there is no evidence that the exam effectively assesses quality or safety of social work practice**. These two bills allow otherwise qualified Social Workers to enter and advance practice, while the State develops an alternative practice-based assessment for licensing.

When the exams excludes dedicated, compassionate and talented Social Workers from moving forward in their career, the quality of life for both the Social Workers and the residents in the Maryland are significantly impacted in the following ways:

- Increase of Maryland residents with unaddressed mental health and substance abuse disorders
- Decrease of accessible preventive measures and mental health emergency services in low-income communities
- Increased 911 calls
- Overcrowded ER rooms due to an uptick of behavioral health visits for mental health crises, substance abuse and/or psychotropic medication refills
- Extensive waitlists for Maryland residents to gain access to community mental health services
- Increased burnout and turnover amongst existing licensed Social Workers due to understaffing which leads to unsustainable work environments
- Disrupted service delivery/gaps in mental health services for Maryland residents due to overburdened caseloads, understaffed agencies and overworked existing licensed Social Workers
- Unlicensed and LMSW's often work multiple demanding jobs in efforts to keep up with the cost of living, while managing intensive caseloads and paperwork requirements while studying for the LMSW/LCSW/C exam which is not feasible, conducive or healthy
- Master Level Social Work Interns transfer their caseloads after a few months of direct service because once their internship is complete, they no longer meet the requirements necessary to carry out the same position until they pass the exam, which has perpetuated a cycle of premature termination, overburdening existing licensed Social Worker with transferred cases or placing vulnerable individuals on another wait list either internally or externally
- The lack of diverse representation in the field, often prevents marginalized community members for seeking out mental health services or sustaining mental health services due to existing health care disparities
- Ultimately, alternative pathways for Social Workers licensure is critical if we truly want to reform the efficacy of service delivery outcomes as to improve the quality of life for Maryland residents.

This is not an exhaustive list. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Victoria Rodriguez

Will Doyle-SB0871 _ SB0872 Testimony-3-9-23.pdf

Uploaded by: William Doyle

Position: FAV

March 9, 2023

To: Members of the Senate Finance Committee

From: Will Doyle, LICSW

Re: SB0871 Social Workers - Licensure Examinations - Moratorium and Workgroup
SB0872 State Board of Social Work Examiners - Temporary License to Practice Social Work

Position: Favorable

I have been a Maryland resident since 2010. I have been a licensed social worker since 2008 and a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker in Washington, DC since 2013. I have worked in homeless services in Washington, DC since 2006.

I fully support **SB0871 and SB0872**, which provide temporary licensing and a moratorium on using exams in the licensing process for social workers. Both bills are urgently needed to address the discriminatory barrier of the Association of Social Work Boards' exams that the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners currently require for social work licensure. After many years of pressure, the Association of Social Work Boards released pass rate data covering the years of 2011 to 2021 on August 5, 2022. This data revealed incredible disparities in pass rates by race, age and those for whom English is a second language. I have included first time pass rate data showing a Masters Exam pass rate of 55.5% for Black test takers as compared to 92.8% for white test takers. Other pass rate disparities are also startlingly bad.

As a direct result of the use of these incredibly flawed exams, **Marylanders have been deprived of 1,227 licensed social workers**. The data I have attached shows how these exams have directly caused workforce shortages. In turn, these shortages have caused harm to the public due to the related unmet needs. I have personally witnessed how the mental health workforce shortage has harmed my family, friends and neighbors.

You will hear testimony from the Association of Social Work Boards, but they will not take any accountability for their exams. Instead, they will insist that their exams are needed to ensure social work competence and public protection. However, despite over 40 years of use, **no evidence of correlation between passing the Association of Social Work Boards' exams and both social work competence and public protection has ever been produced**. They will also not mention that their CEO, in a December 21, 2020 letter to social work deans and directors, stated that the "ASWB does not collect and thus does not release exam outcomes based on demographics". I have attached the full statement in my testimony. Based on their subsequent release of 10 years of such data, this has proven to be an incredible lie. Additionally, despite being a nonprofit, the Association of Social Work Boards increased their net assets by over \$22 million in the period from 2011 to 2020, reflecting how they profit through their monopoly on social work licensing despite their flawed and biased exams. I have also included an attachment presenting this data.

You will hear testimony indicating that removing the Association of Social Work Boards' exams will cause harm to the public and some may try to present Illinois' removal of the Masters Exam as an example. However, their example has already led to thousands of additional licensed social workers to address their own workforce shortage and was only done after they determined that **bachelors and masters level social workers don't pose a significant risk to the public**. I have included an interview with NASW Executive Director, Joel Rubin, as evidence.

You will hear testimony against these bills from NASW-MD. This is despite the national NASW stating on February 3, 2023 that "The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) opposes the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) social work licensing exams after a review of ASWB data shows significant disparities in pass rates for prospective social workers of color, older adults, and those who speak English as a second language." I have attached their statement to my testimony. SB071 and SB0872 are consistent with opposing the Association of Social Work Boards exams, so **opposition from NASW-MD puts them in opposition to their own national organization**.

Other national social work organizations, namely The Council on Social Work Education and the National Association of Deans and Directors Schools of Social Work, have made strong public statements calling for the removal of the Association of Social Work Boards' exams from social work licensure requirements. The Council on Social Work Education sent letters to each state's social work licensing board. I have included both statements with my testimony.

Requiring social work licensing exams at the bachelors and masters level is redundant. I urge you to consider the following social work education requirements as evidence of the sufficiency of degrees without exams at those licensure levels:

The Counsel on Social Work Education (CSWE) is responsible for the accreditation of bachelors and masters social work programs. The CSWE [utilizes](#) (1) a competency based approach to assess student "ability to integrate and apply social work knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes to practice situations in a culturally responsive, purposeful, intentional, and professional manner to promote human and community well-being." Accredited social work programs educate students within the framework of the following 9 competencies:

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
2. Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice
3. Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice
4. Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice
5. Engage in Policy Practice
6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

The competencies are related to the practice of social work rather than strictly objective information that can be assessed through multiple choice exams. These competencies are

developed and assessed through the field education components of social work programs. Bachelors level graduates complete a minimum of 400 supervised field education hours and Masters level graduates complete a minimum of 900 supervised field education hours.

Besides the Association of Social Work Boards' exams as part of social work licensure, Maryland has significant requirements that adequately promote the goal of social work competence and public protection. Please consider the following requirements in assessing their efficacy:

The Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners requires that applicants for Licensed Bachelor Social Worker (LBSW) have a bachelors degree in social work from a CSWE accredited program. To maintain licensure, LBSWs need to renew their license every 2 years. To qualify for renewal, they need to complete at least 30 continuing education hours. LBSWs are required to practice under a social work supervisor unless approved by the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners for independent practice. While under supervision, LBSWs need to receive a minimum of 3 hours per month or 1 hour for every 40 hours work of face to face supervision by a registered and board approved supervisor. To qualify as a supervisor, one must be licensed as an LCSW or LCSW-C for at least 18 months and complete either a masters level course in supervision or 12 hours of supervision training. An LBSW can apply for independent practice status after completing 3 years of active licensure, 4,500 hours of work experience, and 150 hours of face to face supervision by a registered and board approved supervisor.

The Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners requires that applicants for Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW) have a masters degree in social work from a CSWE accredited program. To maintain licensure, LMSWs need to renew their license every 2 years. To qualify for renewal, they need to complete at least 40 continuing education hours. LMSWs are required to practice under a social work supervisor unless approved by the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners for independent practice. While under supervision, LMSWs need to receive a minimum of 3 hours per month or 1 hour for every 40 hours work of face to face supervision by a registered and board approved supervisor. To qualify as a supervisor, one must be licensed as an LCSW or LCSW-C for at least 18 months and complete either a masters level course in supervision or 12 hours of supervision training. An LMSW can apply for independent practice status after completing 3 years of active licensure, 4,500 hours of work experience, and 150 hours of face to face supervision by a registered and board approved supervisor.

The Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners requires that applicants for Certified Social Worker (LCSW) have completed at least 3,000 hours of supervised social work experience over at least 104 weeks. Applicants also must receive at least 100 hours of supervision as an LMSW and therefore need to have completed all related requirements for licensure at the LMSW level. Supervision must be provided by a registered and board approved supervisor. To qualify as a supervisor, one must be licensed as an LCSW or LCSW-C for at least 18 months and complete either a masters level course in supervision or 12 hours of supervision training. To maintain licensure, LCSWs need to renew their license every 2 years. To qualify for renewal, they need to complete at least 40 continuing education hours.

The Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners requires that applicants for Certified Social Worker-Clinical (LCSW-C) have completed at least 3,000 hours of supervised clinical social work experience over at least 104 weeks. This must be direct service to clients, with at least 1,500 hours being face to face client contact. Applicants also must receive at least 100 hours of supervision as an LMSW and therefore need to have completed all related requirements for

licensure at the LMSW level. Supervision must be provided by a registered and board approved supervisor. To qualify as a supervisor, one must be licensed as an LCSW-C for at least 18 months and complete either a masters level course in supervision or 12 hours of supervision training. The content of supervision must [include](#) (2) "assessment, formulation of a diagnostic impression, and treatment of mental disorders and other conditions and the provision of psychotherapy." Applicants must also have completed at least 12 credit hours in clinical courses from a CSWE accredited social work program. To maintain licensure, LCSW-Cs need to renew their license every 2 years. To qualify for renewal, they need to complete at least 40 continuing education hours.

All licensed social workers are listed in an online database available to the public [here](#) (3) and are subject to oversight by the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners. The Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners maintains a process to receive complaints against licensed social workers [here](#) (4). The National Association of Social Workers defines the [Code of Ethics](#) (5) for the social work profession. Maryland also has its own [Code of Ethics](#) (6) for social work.

Professionally, I manage a Housing First program in Washington, DC that provides case management services to over 500 individuals who currently or previously experienced chronic homelessness. I have directly witnessed staff who I as a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker have assessed as qualified and competent be impacted by the use of the Association of Social Work Boards' exams. After obtaining Masters in Social Work degrees to advance their careers and increase their social work competence, they failed the Association of Social Work Boards' exam and were no longer eligible to work in Washington, DC. Despite the DC Council providing historic funding for housing vouchers to make great strides in ending chronic homelessness in 2021, we continue to struggle in 2023 with using these funded resources due to the barrier of the Association of Social Work Boards' exams. Since COVID started in March 2020, we have had 74 unlicensed bachelors and masters level social workers apply to work as Case Managers. However, due to being unlicensed we could not consider them for work in Washington, DC. We have been attempting to hire masters level social workers since September 2022 to serve as supervisors who could aid us in ending homelessness for 125 more individuals. However, with the workforce shortage caused by the Association of Social Work Boards' exams, we have been unable to hire despite consistent hiring efforts and the offer of bonuses. As a result, we have homeless individuals dying while waiting for available staff.

For the reasons listed above, I urge the committee to issue favorable reports for Senate Bills 0871 and 0872.

Sincerely,



Will Doyle, LICSW
College Park, MD
District 21

MD ASWB First Time Pass Rates

Bachelors Exam Pass Rates (2011-2021):

Demographic	Group	# test-takers	Pass rate
Race/Ethnicity	Asian	7	
	Black	189	39.7%
	Hispanic/Latino	40	67.5%
	Multiracial	12	50.0%
	Native American/Indigenous peoples	0	
	White	235	77.9%
Gender	Men	61	63.9%
	Women	437	60.9%
Age	18 - 29	294	65.3%
	30 - 39	106	54.7%
	40 - 49	59	54.2%
	50 and older	39	59.0%
Language	English	464	62.5%
	Non-English	34	44.1%

Masters Exam Pass Rates (2011-2021):

Demographic	Group	# test-takers	Pass rate
Race/Ethnicity	Asian	218	82.1%
	Black	2,708	55.5%
	Hispanic/Latino	458	79.3%
	Multiracial	207	85.0%
	Native American/Indigenous peoples	14	78.6%
	White	4,198	92.8%
Gender	Men	907	74.8%
	Women	7,092	79.0%
Age	18 - 29	4,495	83.0%
	30 - 39	2,094	75.8%
	40 - 49	919	69.0%
	50 and older	495	66.1%
Language	English	7,564	79.4%
	Non-English	439	62.4%

Clinical Exam Pass Rates (2011-2021):

Demographic	Group	# test-takers	Pass rate
Race/Ethnicity	Asian	104	84.6%
	Black	1,129	54.1%
	Hispanic/Latino	195	65.6%
	Multiracial	99	87.9%
	Native American/Indigenous peoples	7	
	White	2,905	88.6%
Gender	Men	503	75.5%
	Women	4,035	79.1%
Age	18 - 29	1,405	86.8%
	30 - 39	1,982	79.8%
	40 - 49	687	67.7%
	50 and older	466	65.9%
Language	English	4,347	79.4%
	Non-English	193	62.2%

MD ASWB Eventual Pass Rates for 2011 to 2021 (from <https://www.aswb.org/exam/contributing-to-the-conversation/aswb-exam-pass-rates-by-state-province/>)

Bachelors Exam		Actual Data		Adjusted Data		
Demographic	Group	# Test-Takers	Pass Rate	# Passed	# Passed (White Pass Rate)	Missing Social Workers
Race/Ethnicity	Asian	8				
	Black	203	44.3%	90	169	79
	Hispanic/Latino	41	68.3%	28	34	6
	Multiracial	12	58.3%	7	10	3
	Native American/Indigenous Peoples	0				
	White	237	83.1%			
Gender	Men	65	67.7			
	Women	452	65.0%			
Age	18-29	291	71.1%			
	30-39	120	60.8%			
	40-49	59	55.9%			
	50 and older	47	53.2%			
Language	English	482	66.6%			
	Non-English	35	48.6%			

Masters Exam		Actual Data		Adjusted Data		
Demographic	Group	# Test-Takers	Pass Rate	# Passed	# Passed (White Pass Rate)	Missing Social Workers
Race/Ethnicity	Asian	239	87.0%	208	232	24
	Black	3,043	70.8%	2,154	2,958	803
	Hispanic/Latino	471	89.0%	419	458	39
	Multiracial	216	90.3%	195	210	15
	Native American/Indigenous Peoples	15	86.7%	13	15	2
	White	4,248	97.2%			
Gender	Men	990				
	Women	7,462				
Age	18-29	4,429				
	30-39	2,306				
	40-49	1,063				
	50 and older	658				
Language	English	7,945				
	Non-English	511				

Clinical Exam		Actual Data		Adjusted Data		
Demographic	Group	# Test-Takers	Pass Rate	# Passed	# Passed (White Pass Rate)	Missing Social Workers
Race/Ethnicity	Asian	107	93.5%	100	103	3
	Black	1,233	77.6%	957	1,190	233
	Hispanic/Latino	201	88.6%	178	194	16
	Multiracial	103	92.2%	95	99	4
	Native American/Indigenous Peoples	7				
	White	2,959	96.5%			
Gender	Men	522	87.9%			
	Women	4,196	91.2%			
Age	18-29	1,361	97.8%			
	30-39	2,038	93.4%			
	40-49	753	83.3%			
	50 and older	568	74.8%			
Language	English	4,514	91.4%			
	Non-English	206	79.1%			

Missing Bachelors Social Workers (LBSW)	88
Missing Masters Social Workers (LMSW)	883
Missing Clinical Social Workers (LCSW-C)	257
Total Missing Social Workers	1,227



Newsletter [Vol. 30 No. 6](#)

December 21, 2020

An open letter to social work deans and directors

Editor's note

On November 9, 2021, ASWB's Board of Directors unanimously approved a motion to gather, analyze, and release examination performance data. The motion directs ASWB staff and its consultants to develop a plan to implement this information-sharing initiative, which is anticipated to include performance data broken down by demographic group for our member jurisdictions as well as schools of social work. Read [ASWB's Board of Directors approves initiative to release examination performance data](#) to learn more.

ASWB's primary service to our members is development and administration of the licensing exams. In providing that service, ASWB is committed to developing and administering licensing exams that fairly measure minimum competence.

Several member boards have recently received inquiries from deans and directors of social work programs in their state asking about availability of data showing pass rates on ASWB exams broken down by demographics. ASWB has met with some member boards and representatives from social work academic programs to address the concerns and questions they have raised. ASWB has also created a web page, [Measuring competence fairly](#), that provides information, videos, and materials outlining the steps that are taken in the exam development process to

ensure fairness. We encourage all of our members to visit the web page. I would like to share with our member boards some perspective and thoughts on these recent inquiries in the form of a letter to the deans and directors. If any member boards would like additional information or desire to have ASWB attend a meeting of your state or provincial board, please let us know.

Dear Deans and Directors,

During 2020, the issue of racial injustice resulting from institutional racism has been prominent throughout the United States, Canada, and the world. Anyone would be hard-pressed to have missed the Black Lives Matter movement and its emphasis on this important issue and the need for change. And evidence is clear that institutional racism remains in many, if not all, systems in our society and negatively affects people of color.



Dwight J. Hymans, MSW, LCSW,
ACSW ASWB Chief Executive
Officer

With the increased movement to enact changes to modify or eliminate the systems that create disparities based on race, the ASWB exams have come under increased scrutiny. That scrutiny has taken the form of additional pressure to provide data showing whether outcomes on the licensing exams vary based on demographic differences.

By now most of you are aware of the policy ASWB has followed since the inception of the organization in 1979. **ASWB does not collect and thus does not release exam outcomes based on demographics.** It is the written policy of ASWB as directed by the ASWB Board of

Directors. We explained our process and policy in a letter sent in February to the president of the National Deans and Directors in response to NADD's initial request for this information. Nevertheless, for the past several months many of you, individually and collectively, have been asking our member boards for this data and asking whether individuals sitting for the exams have an equal chance

of being successful. The unstated assertion is that people of color do not have an equal opportunity and that the exams are biased.

ASWB follows a rigorous process to guard against bias in individual exam items (questions). The social workers involved in this process are primarily volunteers from diverse practice areas, geographic locales, and demographics. From the time exam questions are written by trained item writers, and before the questions appear as scored items on one of the exams, they undergo a stringent evaluation process. This process includes review by social work consultants who work directly with the item writers and review by Exam Committee members—themselves former item writers. This evaluation process looks at many aspects of an item, including indicators of bias. In addition to subject matter experts providing subjective analyses, psychometricians conduct objective analyses using industry-standard statistical tools. One part of the psychometric analysis determines whether varied groups have an advantage or disadvantage in determining the correct answer for that item. ASWB removes any item that shows this type of differential item functioning. This item-by-item analysis is done to assure an equal opportunity. This process is the same method used in any credible high-stakes standardized exam and is consistent with established industry standards.

ASWB's responsibility is to provide services to our members as they work to accomplish their mandate of protecting the public. ASWB's primary service to our members is development and administration of the licensing exams. In providing that service, ASWB is committed to developing and administering licensing exams that fairly measure minimum competence. The exams must be reliable, valid, and legally defensible to ensure that the licensing boards and regulatory bodies that use the exams can stand behind them when a license to practice social work is awarded to an applicant. ASWB answers to the state and provincial member boards who govern the association and determine our bylaws and leadership. They must—and do—hold ASWB to a high standard.

That same mandate of protecting the public drives the work of ASWB. And it provides direction in deciding what the association can and should do within the boundaries of that mandate. ASWB's responsibility to our members doesn't

preclude responding to requests from nonmember organizations. But it does mean we must first ask whether the request is within ASWB's mandate and whether the information we provide is usable data that can help individuals and those assisting them in preparing for the licensing exam and professional practice.

During an earlier time in my career, I spent 15 years teaching and directing field placement programs in three different social work academic programs. I experienced the challenge of preparing students for the profession. Recognizing the challenges for educators, ASWB is currently looking at some data points that are available and can be aggregated in a manner that may be helpful to academic programs. We are also in the process of reconfiguring current resources available to assist in preparing for the exams in a new, less expensive format.

While many believe that ASWB is a social work organization by virtue of its name, the entirety of the name clearly indicates that ASWB is a regulatory organization. As such, ASWB is accountable to the members of the association: the regulatory bodies in 64 states, provinces, districts, and territories. Based on the purpose and use of licensing exams and the data currently collected, ASWB wants to be sure that any information shared with the social work community is first accurate and second appropriate for use in this manner. ASWB is committed to exploring options that meet these criteria.

ASWB Financial Information

Taken from: <https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/222414510>

Year Ending December	Total Revenue	Total Expenses	Net Income
2020	\$16,234,758	\$13,237,385	\$2,997,373
2019	\$17,595,886	\$14,857,969	\$2,737,917
2018	\$16,344,808	\$13,645,258	\$2,699,550
2017	\$15,565,636	\$13,254,089	\$2,311,547
2016	\$13,767,709	\$12,604,039	\$1,163,670
2015	\$13,964,190	\$11,244,788	\$2,719,402
2014	\$12,692,553	\$9,867,582	\$2,824,971
2013	\$11,492,614	\$9,120,837	\$2,371,777
2012	\$10,279,908	\$8,782,127	\$1,497,781
2011	\$9,461,425	\$8,457,538	\$1,003,887
Average	\$13,739,949	\$11,507,161	\$2,232,788
Total	\$137,399,487	\$115,071,612	\$22,327,875
	Net Assets as of 12/31/20:		\$33,841,553

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MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2023

Eliminating the ASWB exam from the Illinois LSW law: Interview with Joel Rubin, MSW, LSW, ACSW, CAE



[Episode 133] Today's episode of the Social Work Podcast is an interview with Joel L. Rubin, MSW, LSW, ACSW, CAE about the legislative process that NASW-IL went through to eliminate the requirement that BSW and MSW graduates from accredited social work programs in Illinois had to take the ASWB licensing exam in order to get their LSW.

Joel has served as the Executive Director of the 5,000 member Illinois Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) since October of 1999.

He shares the story about how and why the legislation changed. We talked about how the legislative process works, from connecting with other social workers online about pressing issues, to reaching out to NASW staff and volunteer board members, supporting prospective legislative candidates, meeting with your elected officials and how NASW state chapters serve as a resource for social workers and legislators.

Download MP3 [27:33]

0:00 / 27:33

Transcript

Introduction

Jonathan Singer: Hey there podcast listeners, Jonathan here. Today's episode is about how a bill becomes a law. It is about how States regulate social workers. About how social work organizations gatekeep who gets in and who is kept out. It is the story of how the ASWB was written out of Illinois law for basic social work licensure. Now, this story makes a little more sense with some context. On February 3, 2023 the National Association of Social Workers put out a press release (<https://www.socialworkers.org/News/News-Releases/ID/2611/NASW-Opposes-Association-of-Social-Work-Boards-ASWB-Exams>) saying that they opposed, "the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) social work licensing exams after a review of ASWB data shows significant disparities in pass rates for prospective social workers of color, older adults, and those who speak English as a second language."

Now, one of the implications of the largest social work organizations in the world saying NO to the ASWB exam is that they had to take a stand on something that social workers have long wanted - the ability to provide protected services across state lines. Dozens of other regulated professions like psychology and nursing are able to practice across state lines. The desire for an interstate compact intensified during the pandemic when most social workers and many clients discovered online mental health services. Now, the press release said that "NASW is prepared to oppose the Social Work Interstate Compact Legislation being developed by the Council of State Governments (CSG) if the bill is not substantially improved, including the removal of provisions which codify the ASWB exams. NASW is eager to work with CSG to develop multi-state social work practice legislation."

So, does this mean that NASW is against licensure exams? No. Does it mean that NASW is against interstate compacts? No. What it means is that the current ASWB social work licensure exam basic licensure has some real problems. And those problems were exemplified in the pass rate data that ASWB released in August 2022. ASWB released those data after years of organizations like the National Association of Deans and Directors, NASW national and state chapters, and individuals such as Matt DeCarlo and others publicly requested ASWB release their pass rate data. After the ASWB pass rate data were released, several social workers authored a Change.org petition called, ASWB: End Discriminatory Social Work Licensing Exams.

The petition was authored by Tay D. Robinson, DSW, CSW; Charla Yearwood, LCSW; Shimon Cohen, LCSW; Alex Remy, LCSW; Brit Holmberg, LCSW; Jen Hirsch, LMSW, APHSW-C; Matt DeCarlo, PhD, MSW; Gerald Joseph, MSW, ACM, CTP; Kim Young, LCSW; Cassandra Walker, LCSW CCTP; Sierra M. Wetmore, MSW; Bethany Matson, MSW. As of February 12, 2023 10,147 people had signed it.

In today's episode, I was able to talk to Joel Rubin, President of NASW Illinois. Because what they did in Illinois was really interesting. They advocated for the ASWB exam to be eliminated for basic licensure in Illinois for social workers who graduated with bachelor's or masters degrees from accredited schools of social work. Now, it's important for you to know when you're listening to this episode that there are some people who are opposed to licensure and regulation of social workers period.

Cramer & Bell's Encyclopedia of Social Work entry on ASWB notes that regulation of social workers to protect citizens from harm while receiving services from professionals extends back to 1934, when Puerto Rico passed the first statute regulating social work. California passed social work practice regulation in 1945. By 1992, all 50 states, the District of

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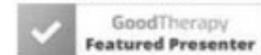
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Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands passed social work regulation. Comer & Bell noted that opponents of regulation saw it as "elitist, exclusionary, discriminatory in requirements, restrictive to the available workforce, cumbersome, expensive, and duplicative (Bibus & Boutté-Queen, 2011; CSWE, 2018; Garcia, 1990). Macro practitioners involved with community organizing, planning, and administration have criticized licensure and regulation as favoring clinical practice over macro practice (CSWE, 2018; Donaldson, Fogel, Hill, Erickson, & Ferguson, 2016; Donaldson, Hill, Ferguson, Fogel, & Erickson, 2014; Hill, Fogel, Donaldson, & Erickson, 2017)." "The National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW), founded in 1968, immediately registered opposition to social work licensure because it would establish "an elitist hierarchy within the profession." Licensure would exclude paraprofessionals and baccalaureate social workers employed in community and indigenous programs, who understood and practiced with cultural competence. To learn more about the NABSW, check out Episode 38 of *Doin' the Work* podcast where Shimon Cohen interviews Mr. Garland Jagers & Dr. Denise McLane-Davison.

This episode does not argue against licensure. It argues against requiring an graduates of accredited social work programs taking a flawed exam to be licensed in Illinois. This is also different from being a license clinical social worker. In Illinois, the clinical ASWB exam is still required for the clinical licensure.

What does it mean for social workers who graduate from accredited BSW and MSW programs to become licensed social workers without having to take an exam? What does it mean for the general public? Why and how was a bill that eliminated the ASWB master's level exam as a requirement for licensure in Illinois able to move from an idea to signed legislation in a single legislative session?

So, sit back and enjoy the story of how Illinois got rid of the ASWB exam for basic social work licensure. And along the way, you're going to learn a little bit about how a bill becomes a law. And if in this moment, you are thinking of that Schoolhouse Rock cartoon from 1976, then you're my kind of people. I was six that thing came out. And it forever changed the way I understood the rough and tumble process of getting an idea to become a bill to become signed legislation. And Joel's story is going to talk a little bit about that. About how the legislative process works, from connecting with other social workers online about pressing issues, to reaching out to NASW staff and volunteer board members, supporting prospective legislative candidates, meeting with your elected officials and how NASW state chapters serve as a resource for social workers and legislators.

And so, without further ado, on to episode 133 of the Social Work Podcast: Eliminating the ASWB exam from the Illinois LSW law: An interview with Joel Rubin.

Interview

0:07:17

Jonathan Singer: Joel, thanks so much for being here today on the Social Work podcast. What's the story behind NASW Illinois advocating to eliminate the ASWB exam for Master's level licensure?

0:07:30

Joel Rubin: It's quite a story, Jonathan. First of all, thank you for having me on the podcast today. So I think to put it all in perspective, I'm going to go back a couple of years. And so this is basically in the fall of 2020. The association of Social Work Boards ASWB informed Illinois that the state was out of compliance with their testing standards and that bachelor's level social workers BSWs would soon no longer be able to be eligible to take the exam required for the LSW.

Okay? Both here in Illinois. In Illinois, the LSW exam is for BSWs with the proper supervision and MSW, it's non clinical level licensure. So that basically left the state with two options. And the first of these options was that we could have created a new BSW license that utilized the ASWB bachelor's exam. Now, that new license would have had a smaller scope of practice than the current LSW, basically upending existing bachelor's level LSWs.

The chapter in NASW Illinois opposed this action. A second option was that the state could stop licensing BSWs altogether, which effectively would make Illinois an MSW only profession. And we also post that option now. So we looked at these options, we were faced with these options, and we began to ask ourselves this following question is the ASWB exam absolutely necessary for LSW licensure? Now, that's a significant leap, a very, very significant leap that perhaps was asked in the past, but we decided to ask it, and we basically started to really inquire about what would that entail.

And so when we looked at that, we started to look at several states, including California, that don't require the ASWB exam for basic licensure. So in addition to that, in discussions with our Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation, IDFPR, they indicated that data showed that this population, meaning basic licensed social workers with the non clinical level of licensure, posed very little risk to the public.

And that rigorous pre and post graduation supervision requirements, coupled with existing Illinois requirements of the words that and we all know this, that all LSWs that engage in clinical social work have to be working under the auspices and control of an LCSW. So this really created an environment where additional testing became unnecessary. So when we sort of it was sort of this AHA moment. This is coupled with the fact that for many years, both NASW Illinois and NASW on a national level and other stakeholders across the country had repeatedly requested that data be released from ASWB, because we began, and we've heard for years, or this, ancillary evidence that the ASWB test disproportionately harms social workers based on minority demographics. So this was sort of the background. Now, mind you, this was before, this past summer when ASWB released their initial data on first time test taker.

0:11:51

Jonathan Singer: So that was summer of 2022 when ASWB released the data that people have been asking for a long time. And it created this firestorm where people were like, AHA, the proof is in the pudding. You're releasing your own data and you're showing that pass rates for white test takers are in some cases double that of black test takers.

0:12:13

Joel Rubin: Correct. And we break that down. In Illinois, it was broken down. So this was proof that this was a significant, challenging situation. So put this all together. We felt that the state would be better off by actually removing the ASWB test for the LSW level of licensure, because it would continue to serve as a burden to access for many, many social workers in the state. Now, we had heard over the years from people all the time, I've tried to take not the clinical level licensure, but just the LSW level of licensure.

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ABOUT YOUR HOST

Jonathan B. Singer, Ph.D., LCSW

I'm a Professor of social work at Loyola University Chicago and a licensed clinical social worker who specializes in working with children and families. My Twitter handle is @socworkpodcast. I have always been an advocate of technology. In the 1990s, I created a number of "first" Web sites for social service agencies in Austin, Texas. In 1996 I developed the first electronic medical record for my agency, ATCMHMR, leading to my involvement in the selection and pilot testing of the first agency-wide remote EMR program. From 1996 - 2002 I worked for ATCMHMR as a



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I've tried 1, 2, 3, 4 times to pass the test, and then people just give up. And that has such an impact on all kinds of things. It has impact on social workers not being regulated. It has impact on someone's career path and also making sure that we have a more diverse workforce, workforce here in the state of Illinois.

0:13:25

Jonathan Singer: So it sounds like NASW Illinois for a long time had been concerned about the ASWB exam, hearing from folks in the field who had gone through accredited schools of social work, had passed and then not been able to pass the licensure exam. And then there was this kind of ironically pressure from ASWB to do something different. And NASW Illinois decided, well, we're going to essentially think outside the box and say, maybe we don't need this. So how did you move from NASW Illinois saying, we want there to be a change to actually having this legislation that ended up being signed?

0:14:10

Joel Rubin: So, as I said earlier, after many discussions with IDFP and IDFP, noting that data shows that the LSW level of licensure does not pose that significant risk to the public. And after hearing all these things from our members for years, we decided to connect with two incredible sponsors of this legislation two social workers that are in our Illinois General Assembly that's Representative Lindsey, the Point of Chicago and State Senator Karina Via, who's a school social worker from the western suburbs of Chicago.

And we basically had a bill that more or less said was keeping the LSW level of licensure in place, but just removing the test. Okay, one of these things where and this doesn't usually happen with legislation, legislation sometimes can take 1235 long time to get passed. And then after it gets passed, it's a lot different than what you initially started out with. We introduced this legislation in early 2021, the early part of the session, and it passed both House chambers, both chambers in the Illinois General Assembly and then was signed by Governor Pritzker in August of 2021. This is Senate Bill 1632. So it's an incredible sort of an achievement on this as well.

And it went into effect January 1, 2022. Now, what this has done and what have we seen so far? So basically what the bill did, obviously it removed the ASWB exam, but it also allows Illinois BSW a continued path to licensure and employment in the profession. It removed a significant burden to access that disproportionately affects BIPOC communities and social workers without resources to pursue an MSW.

It removed yet another financial strain on recent MSW graduates and BSWS, and that is BSWS who have already completed their three years of postgraduate supervision by waiving the exam and exam prep cost associated with licensure. It also created a logical path for MSWs to becoming LSWs while collecting their required supervision hours to become a licensed clinical social worker. I can tell you that I get that question almost daily from people.

The chapter gets these questions all the time. Should I get my LSW or should I just wait to get my LCSW? What this does is it brings in a whole cohort of people now that are regulated by the state, which I think is really, really important, the importance of licensure, and I think we need to be really clear here, is that we're talking about the initial level of licensure, we're not talking about testing here.

And then lastly, too, and this is another point that this makes is that it creates a much needed path for macro level social workers to be legally called a social worker in the state of Illinois title that they've earned and entitled to carry. So this has been a significant probably in the many years that I've been with NASW, I have never encountered the more positive feedback from social workers about a significant piece of legislation.

And I can say that since the law went into effect January 1, there have been probably a couple of thousand people that have become LSWs under this new, under this new rule.

0:18:29

Jonathan Singer: So it sounds like the process for getting this legislation passed was a little different than other legislative processes in the sense that it was faster. Why do you think that was so?

0:18:45

Joel Rubin: I would say there are a couple of reasons. One is that first of all, we have the NASW Illinois chapter has a significantly strong presence in Springfield, a really good reputation in sort of relating to legislators from all different backgrounds. That's one. Two, I think we had two very motivated sponsors, both social workers. One state Rep. Lindsey the .1 state Senator Karina Via And lastly, the issue around social workforce, and this is really a workforce issue in many ways, is that we've been very focused in, in Illinois on getting a sense of what are the barriers to advancement in the social workforce, diversifying the social work workforce and issues around licensure have been a major barrier.

In fact, we had one grant funded study that we did in conjunction with Liability University of Chicago School Source to work on this issue. And we're right now finishing up another study on diversifying the pipelines of the profession. So I would say that those three kind of points sort of all came together sort of a perfect storm in many ways. Plus, I think the timing, I think there's a real recognition in our General Assembly and in the state that we need to have a really good and diverse mental health workforce and obviously social workers play a significant part of that mental health workforce.

0:20:39

Jonathan Singer: So you said you had two really strong sponsors. What does it mean in terms of the legislative process, in terms of getting legislation through committees and pass to have strong sponsors? What do they do and how do you cultivate that?

0:20:56

Joel Rubin: So one of the most important things that we do on a regular basis is that we encourage social workers to be involved in the political process. Election comes around. Legislators that are candidates that are running for office, that support social work values, these are people we need to support. And by doing that and also by being available to all these elected officials as content experts, this all helps when you want to pass legislation because a lot of times elected officials will come to an advocate, will come to NASW to say, hey, what do you think about this bill?

Or hey, someone came to me with this issue. What do you think about this? That just doesn't happen out of thin air. That happens because you do a lot of hard work working with people from the time that there are even candidates not even in

bilingual social worker providing individual, family and group therapy to children and families. From 1997 - 2000 I was co-owner of a group therapy practice specializing in conjoint family therapy. From 2002 - 2004 I was the lead therapist for Jewish Family Service and an adjunct instructor at the University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work. As an adjunct at UT-Austin, I developed and taught the school's first Crisis Intervention course. Between 2009 and 2015 I was an assistant professor of Social Work at Temple University. I write for academic and popular publications.

View my complete profile



: logo design by Jesse Kahn : .

office. You put that all together and that's really part of the legislative process. We're mandated in our code of Ethics and Standard 6.4 to do that. So it's not anything that shouldn't be new to social workers.

It's that we just tend to think that someone else is going to do it. And the legislation that we got passed regarding the removal of the ASWB test is real proof of how that cultivation and support works.

0:22:42

Jonathan Singer: So you were able to support these folks to become part of the legislature and what did they do in the process of getting a bill passed into legislation? Like what is their role?

0:23:02

Joel Rubin: Their role is to work with other legislators together with NASW to get sponsors for a bill to make sure that a particular bill gets through a committee. It's a whole process in Springfield and having that understanding, it in support of people who are on certain committees. If a bill goes to a certain committee for a hearing to be familiar with the people on that committee, that all is part of working with different legislators and having relationship with them as well.

0:23:45

Jonathan Singer: Joel, I really appreciate you talking through the process that NASW, Illinois went through. To sort of think about not having the ASWB exam, the legislative process. And so for folks who are listening, who are kind of excited about being able to make changes at the policy level, legislative level, what are some recommendations that you have for ways they can get involved? Things that folks can do, social workers can do to make this kind of macro level change?

0:24:17

Joel Rubin: Well, first thing what social workers can do is they can join NASW. That's always an important step and it's not a cliché, but our strength is in our numbers. We have over 5000 members in the state of Illinois. We could easily have 8000 or 9000 members. So that's really important.

0:24:41

Jonathan Singer: And one of the things that's important about that, right, is that when you can tell a legislator we're representing 8000 folks, 8000 professionals, right, paid professionals who are doing this are students, then that's different than we're representing 100 people, right?

0:25:00

Joel Rubin: And generally what we say is that we represent many more than our membership because we are and a lot of people, even nonmembers, would say, oh yeah, it's great, they're doing a great job, and all that. So I think the second thing is that when someone gets an action alert from NASW about anything, it could have been about the LSW law, but it could be all kinds of legislation. Please answer it. It has never been easier to respond back to something because we generally provide people with ready made letters that you can either edit to send to all your elected officials.

You can do it from the comfort of your couch, on your phone, or whatever device you prefer. It's never been easier. That's really, really important. Thirdly is getting involved with the chapter, whether it's here in Illinois or other chapters across the country, getting involved, running for a position on the board of directors, a leadership position for students. And in here in Illinois, and this is similar to other states, is that we have a very active student liaison network that involves all social work programs here in the state of Illinois that meet monthly. And they're very involved in coordinating our annual advocacy day, which a lot of states have.

We are still waiting. We hope that we're going to be back live in 23 we don't know yet. It all depends on a lot of things. But that's a really great opportunity for people to sort of see things in action, how things work in Springfield, how things work in your state capital. But those are some real basic things that and also that when we ask people is that it's also important when you're contacting your legislature is you don't always have to go to Springfield. You can always contact or even meet with them in their district office, which is actually a preferable place to meet people. It's less hectic, there's less distractions. There's a lot of opportunities for that as well.

0:27:19

Jonathan Singer: That's great. So if I had an idea, right, something that I was seeing in my practice, something that was kind of chatter amongst my social work colleagues that I thought, this is kind of an issue that seems to be broadly problematic. What's the best way to kind of move forward with that visa vis what you're talking about?

0:27:47

Joel Rubin: So a really focused way today in which it gets obviously you can contact me directly, you can contact our legislative director Kyle Hillman directly or people on our volunteer leadership. But one of the most effective ways that people communicate to the chapter or within the member, within the social community is through our MyNASW community. It's a community digest that people posted at all time, but we have people posted about all kinds of issues from third party reimbursement to testing to referrals to all kinds of things. And we're very responsive, as all NASW chapters are, we're very responsive to our members. So if you contact us, we're going to get back to you. So that is one of the clearer ways to reach out to us as well.

0:28:54

Jonathan Singer: Well, Joel, thank you so much for being on the podcast and talking with us about NASW Illinois legislative win and the process of being involved at the policy level. I really appreciate it.

0:29:08

Joel Rubin: Thank you, Jonathan. And feel free anyone, to reach out to me at NASW. My email address is jrubin.naswil@socialworkers.org, and I appreciate this opportunity to be on your podcast. Thanks.

Transcription by deciphra.ai

Bio

Joel L. Rubin, MSW, LSW, ACSW, CAE has served as the Executive Director of the 5,000 member Illinois Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) since October of 1999. He has over 25 years of non-for-profit management and fundraising experience, including extensive work with boards of directors, committees and volunteers, and advocacy

around a wide variety of social work, human service and international political issues, as advocating on behalf of social work workforce issues. In addition to his responsibilities in Illinois, Mr. Rubin, served as Acting Deputy Director of Chapter Operations for the NASW from March 2019 to July 2020.

He received his MSW from Jane Addams College of Social Work at the University of Illinois of Chicago in 1983 and a B.A. in Comparative Politics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1981. He is a member of the Academy of Certified Social Workers (ACSW), a Licensed Social Worker (LSW) in the state of Illinois and is also a Certified Association Executive (CAE).

Mr. Rubin is a graduate of the Wexner Heritage Fellowship Leadership Program and a current adjunct professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Jane Addams College of Social Work, the Loyola University Chicago School of Social Work and Northeastern Illinois University.

He currently serves on the board of the Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership and is a member of the City of Chicago's Council on Mental Health Equity.

Mr. Rubin lives in Skokie, IL with his wife Tamara. They have three children and two grandchildren.

References and Resources

To get an idea of how many steps are involved in getting a bill signed into law in Illinois, check out:
https://www.ilga.gov/commission/lis/98bill_law.pdf

APA (7th ed) citation for this podcast:

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Posted by Jonathan B. Singer, Ph.D., LCSW at 11:00PM 

Labels: #MacroSW, Interview, NASW, Policy

1 comment:

Shannon Kish said...



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February 17, 2023 at 11:18AM

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News Releases



NASW Opposes Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Exams

Feb 03, 2023

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) opposes the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) social work licensing exams after a review of ASWB data shows significant disparities in pass rates for prospective social workers of color, older adults, and those who speak English as a second language.

NASW is prepared to oppose the Social Work Interstate Compact Legislation being developed by the Council of State Governments (CSG) if the bill is not substantially improved, including the removal of provisions which codify the ASWB exams. NASW is eager to work with CSG to develop multi-state social work practice legislation.

In an August 2022 statement after the release of the ASWB data, NASW committed to working closely with its partners to propose innovative solutions that reduce harm and increase diversity at all levels of social work practice.

These efforts will initially target removal of non-independent social work practice exams which may be biased, and support efforts to strengthen competency measures.

NASW looks forward to working with its partners to implement these strategic initiatives and to promoting the diversity and well-being of the social work profession, and the health and well-being of the populations social workers serve.

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW), in Washington, DC, is the largest membership organization of professional social workers. It promotes, develops, and protects the practice of social work and social workers. NASW also seeks to enhance the well-being of individuals, families, and communities through its advocacy.

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New Jersey State Board of Social Work Examiners
124 Halsey St.
Newark, New Jersey 07102

October 3, 2022

Dear Social Work Licensing Examiner:

As president and chief executive officer of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), I write to you on behalf of social work education programs across the country. As you are likely aware, the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) recently released a report documenting examination pass rates across different levels of the social work profession. Although the data needs further analysis, the descriptive statistics suggest alarming disparities for exam-takers in several categories. The most egregious disparity impacts Black test takers. In addition, Indigenous, and other People of Color also pass at lower rates than White test-takers; those that speak English as a second language pass at lower rates than native English speakers; and older test-takers pass at lower rates than younger ones. Given that the ASWB exam is the only national licensing examination available, these data raise grave concern that the need for a diverse health, behavioral health, and social service workforce (of which social workers are a considerable portion of providers¹) is being significantly impeded.

As the national body for social work education in the United States, Puerto Rico, and Guam, the CSWE urges you to:

- a. Suspend the use of the ASWB exam until a thorough analysis has been completed which will suggest evidenced-based recommendations to correct for inequities.
- b. Consider graduation from a CSWE-Accredited social work education program evidence of beginning competence to practice social work as a professional social worker (granting all graduates licensure or pre-licensure status).
 - a. The only exception to the above involves the license to practice clinical social work. CSWE supports the need for a post-graduate process to license practice at this level, however if the ASWB exam remains central to this process, further analysis of the descriptive data must also occur for this category to identify possible issues.

¹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics ([bls.gov](https://www.bls.gov)) 2020 report indicates there are 715,600 social workers that work in Child, Family, School, Healthcare, Mental Health, and Substance abuse treatment settings.



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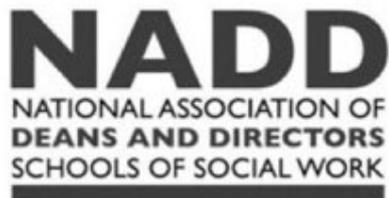
- c. Consider the action taken by the state of Illinois (January 1, 2022) through the Public Act 102-0326, whereby a licensing examination is no longer required for licensure as an Illinois Licensed Social Worker (LSW).
- d. Consider decoupling the Interstate Compact, currently in development, from the ASWB licensure exam.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be happy to engage with you further about the concerns and/or recommendations I offer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darla Spence Coffey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Darla Spence Coffey, PhD, MSW
President and Chief Executive Officer
dcoffey@cswe.org



September 2, 2022

NADD STATEMENT ON ASWB RELEASE OF REPORT ON LICENSURE PASSAGE RATES

As you may now know, the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB), the organization currently responsible for creating, implementing, and monitoring Social Work's National Licensing Examination, recently released a report documenting exam passage rates across the profession. The report helps us to understand the disparities in the diversity of Social Work's workforce nationally. Data clearly evidence extreme racial and age biases in the exam. Moreover, the report reflects an organization that perpetuated use of an exam that has substantively contributed to the documented shortage of diverse licensed social workers.

Suspecting disparities in exam passage rates, Social Work's National Association of Deans and Directors (NADD) had requested these data from ASWB for many years to identify the extent of the issue across the profession. With increasing anecdotal evidence mounting, NADD established a National Licensing Exam Task Force a year ago to elevate the issue and explore alternatives to the existing exam. NADD's primary concern is to ensure an unbiased assessment process such that achieving status as a professional social worker is accessible to all graduates of our accredited programs.

Now, having knowingly held data that clearly reflects extreme test bias, ASWB publicly released not only aggregate data across the profession, but individual State and program level data. The issue is even more egregious than anticipated and reflects a crisis in the profession. NADD calls on social work State licensing boards and legislators to urgently act to immediately address the current exam and assessment process to effect rapid equity in the nation's workforce. Specific immediate and longer-term proposed actions include:

- a. Immediately suspend all fees associated with test taking
- b. Rebate fees paid to persons experiencing multiple test attempts, particularly by groups of people where data demonstrate consistent bias
- c. Suspend Interstate COMPACT discussions based on a uniform 'standardized exam' until biased testing issues are addressed
- d. Consider legislative remedies such as those passed in Illinois and Rhode Island limiting the ASWB test option, recognizing graduation from a CSWE accredited university/college program as an optional pathway toward some levels of licensure
- e. Charge NADD, the academic leaders of the Social Work profession, to collaboratively explore alternatives to the existing exam and monitoring process

NADD is sending separate calls for action to other constituent groups, such as the Council on Social Education and the National Association of Social Workers to work together to identify and address issues that may be contributing to the noted disparities.

NADD

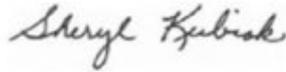
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
DEANS AND DIRECTORS
SCHOOLS OF SOCIAL WORK

We know you share NADD's concern and sense of urgency to effectively respond to these documented disparities. With Social Work workforce shortages across the nation, it is imperative for us all to work together to find responsible resolutions. Should you have any questions that we can help to inform, please contact Dr. Martell Teasley, President of NADD, at martell.teasley@utah.edu.

Sincerely,



Martell Teasley, PhD, MSW
President, NADD
University of Utah
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Sheryl Kubiak, PhD, MSW
Co-Chair, NADD Task Force
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Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Bracha Poliakoff

Position: FWA

I am writing to express my support for bills SB871 (with the amendment of the more diversified workgroup) and SB872. I am very concerned about the discrepancies in pass rates for individuals who are non-white, older, hard-of-hearing, etc.-The licensing exams do nothing to "protect the public" or ensure the integrity and quality of individuals entering the social work profession. What the exams actually do is demonstrate people's abilities to take a very specific type of test. I say this as someone who passed both the LMSW and LCSW-C the first time. I look at my passing as a combination of luck and privilege. There is a cultural component to thinking about things in a certain way. Many people who are excellent potential social workers have a hard time answering questions in a way that is so abstract and non-realistic as they are asked on the exam. The questions do not reflect real life at all (I have not used any of the information on the test in my real-life practice in the past 10 years!) and do not show who will be able to provide excellent social work services in the future. I would love to see additional research on these topics so a more effective way of licensing can be established retaining the professionalism and excellence of social work services in our state and nationwide. I think pausing the exams is the right thing to do while research is done in the workgroup to determine causes of these discrepancies and plan next steps. Thank you for considering a favorable vote on this legislation.

Bracha Poliakoff, LCSW-C

Untitled document.pdf

Uploaded by: Emanuel Wilkerson

Position: FWA

Emanuel Wilkerson's Testimony on Friday, March 10 for in favor of
SB0871: Social Workers - Licensure Examinations - Moratorium and Workgroup
SB0872: Social Workers - Licensure Examinations - Moratorium and Workgroup

Hello, thank you for reading my written testimony in favor of Bills SB0871 and SB0872.

Hello everyone. My name is Emanuel Wilkerson. I am a 25-year-old African American male unlicensed social worker. After 6 years of investing my time and money in higher education, I became the first in my family to attain a bachelor's and master's degree in social work. So today I will talk about the ASWB experience and I am in favor of these bills by sharing my personal story.

The ASWB has negatively impacted my life and stopped my career before it could even begin. I entered social work because I grew up seeing adults with degrees and licenses prove time and time again how ineffective they were at helping people in my community. I grew up with a speech impediment but still chose a speaking profession because my words, empathy, creativity, and ability to understand people called me to do great things in this field. I knew what it felt like to be in environments where no one shares your skin color and to be the victim of injustice.

So since the end of 2021, I studied for the exam while working full-time in my master's program. I utilized everything possible to achieve a passing score by studying for many hours a day for nearly a year. I spent thousands on test prep books, practice exams from their website that you have to re-purchase every time you retake it, and on the exam fee itself. I drained nearly all of my savings in the licensure process.

All of this resulted in me failing the exams 3 times and losing several job offers with agencies looking to hire me post-grad school. I was out unemployed for months following graduation. I was unable to support myself financially. For 2 years now my father has been in the hospital from a stroke and I am unable to support my mother with the hospital bills. This degree I invested 6 years of my life is useless due to the test.

I could have chosen some other field like communication or psychology and be allowed to do many human services jobs in MD, but I specifically chose social work to make a real difference for marginalized people. Now I am not allowed to work with people at all because I cannot pass a racially biased examination. I am being punished for wanting to help my community. There are many, many stories like mine since about half of Black MD social work graduates are unable to pass this exam on the first try, versus over 90% of white social work graduates.

Now I know what some of you are thinking "If you failed the test then you are not meeting the standards of the social work profession. That's what the exam is for." But I ask whose standard am I not meeting? Who makes those scenario questions and decides the answers on the exam? Social work is a varied and diverse field of practice that helps human beings who are

equally varied and diverse. No exam will ever reflect that. No social worker treats their practice the same if you did treat them the same then you are not “meeting the client where they’re at”.

To conclude

The social work profession says it wants people like me - people of color and people with lived experience, but it utilizes a licensing exam that has a clear bias against people like me. If anyone disagrees with me, I ask you to explain those numbers on ASWBs data reports. If you are able to. To see some social workers want to keep the exam where it stands even after the data shows clear gaps in representation is laughable and hypocritical to all CSWE 9. Please support these bills Mary Washington is advocating for because my life is suffering for no reason.

\

Jordan Bridges Written Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Jordan Bridges

Position: FWA

SB871 and SB 872 Testimony

As a student pursuing a masters in social work and potentially various licenses, I am here today to urge you to support Senate Bills 871 and 872. The obvious disparities visible in the pass rate data contradict everything the social work profession stands for. The knowledge I've gained surrounding the ethical responsibilities of a social worker does not align with the disregard for equitable treatment as it relates to the workers experience. From the perspective of someone who works with the Department of social services in foster care, clients need workers who know and understand their experiences. My first day on the job I inquired about the process of licensing and I'll tell you what my supervisors and their supervisors told me: You can take the exam and pass, but you will have to take it as if you're not yourself. They informed me that I would have to adopt the perspective of someone who wasn't aware of our clients' realities to be recognized as a licensed social worker. While the turnover continues to increase, the amount of regulated workers continues to fall. Allowing qualified social workers to enter and advance practice, while the State develops an alternative practice-based assessment for licensing helps to mitigate the impacts of discriminatory regulations on not only workers, but clients who have been deprived of competent care. Thank you.

SupportSB0872-Massey.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Massey

Position: FWA

Michael Massey, PhD, MSW, M.Ed., Assistant Professor, Catholic University of America

Support for SB0872

I am a Professor of Social Work at Catholic University and a resident of Maryland. I am asking you to pass SB0871, which will immediately address the unnecessary harm that is being caused by the social work license exams and offer a way of finding a better path forward.

Right now, licensure exam requirements are needlessly keeping hundreds, if not thousands, of qualified and ready social workers from serving their communities. We know this because the organization who creates and administers the national exam, the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB), final—after a 40 years of testing—released demographic exam outcome data. The results were worse than we thought—there are huge racial and other disparities that have allowed most white social work graduates to enter the field and left many social workers of Color out in the cold. From 2011-2021, white test-takers in Maryland passed the Masters level exam at a first-time rate of 93%, while Black test-takers passed at 56% rate and Hispanic/Latinos at a 79% rate. Clinical exam pass rates are similar, with rates of 89%, 54%, and 66% respectively. These exams are machines of racial inequality.

We've done the math. If all exam-takers in Maryland passed at the white pass rates during 2011-2021, we would have over 1200 more licensed social workers. In 2021, Illinois passed a bill that eliminated the Masters level exam. According to the NASW-IL chapter, in the year before the law went into effect, only 421 social workers became licensed. Since then, 2600 more social workers have become licensed. The exams not only impact the lives and livelihoods of qualified social workers, they deny Maryland communities a diverse pool of social workers that can provide culturally responsive approaches and help alleviate the current mental health crisis.

With overwhelming evidence of racial and other disparities in exam performance and no evidence that exams do what they are intended to do, there is no way to continue to justify their use. Eliminating exams would not be lowering standards, it would be acknowledging the false standards that are reinforcing racial discrimination and shortchanging our communities. Even without exams, social workers have a high bar for licensure. They must graduate from an accredited school of social work, obtain thousands of hours of closely supervised practice, fulfill continuing education requirements, and get a criminal background check. Taken together, that is a more than adequate baseline of training and competence.

As a social work professor at Catholic University, I have seen excellent students graduate and immediately stagnate as they are denied jobs that they are qualified for. They put in the work and demonstrated time and again that they are ready to do the difficult and nuanced work that the job demands. Many of these students, who are mostly Black, want to go back to their own communities and serve people with whom they share background and culture. Yet, an exam that is unsupported by evidence keeps them from doing so. And we all are lesser for it.

SB0872 will immediately remove the exam barrier that is harming so many people in Maryland and add to our depleted workforce. Passing SB0872 protects the public, helps Maryland, and moves us towards justice.

Written Testimony for SB871.pdf

Uploaded by: Bynia Reed

Position: UNF

From the Desk of:

Bynia Reed
6425 Ivy Spring Rd., Elkridge, MD 21075
(301) 466-2234
byniar@yahoo.com

March 9, 2023

Dear Members of the Committee,

I have been a volunteer and consultant for ASWB for 15 years. I was an Item Writer for the ASWB Clinical exam, served on the Exam Committee and chaired that Committee (whose task is to review & approve the questions for the exam), and I am now a Consultant who edits items submitted by writers for the Exam. As a Black woman, I can attest to the rigorous process that goes into ensuring items on the exam are free from bias toward or against any group. Our writers and the committee come from a wide array of backgrounds, we screen the items thoroughly, and the items are “pre-tested” on the exam (as non-scored items) and then we review their psychometric data before placing them on a scored exam. This process allows us to delete items showing any type of bias against minority test takers, a particular gender, or against low scorers. We only use items that show good psychometrics according to parameters that allow for fairness.

ASWB voluntarily released the test data in an attempt to be transparent. Yes, the disparities are glaring and problematic. It sheds light on more work that needs to be done and ASWB is committed to doing what it takes to close those gaps. It is important to know that the test data was taken before ASWB moved from a 4-option multiple choice test to a 3-option multiple choice test. I strongly believe that the new format lends itself to items that are cleaner, clearer to read, concise, and help examiners choose the right answer for what’s being tested, regardless of background.

It is also important to note that school data was released. The passing rates of students of several Universities and Schools of Social work in Maryland showed disparities among their graduates of color not being properly prepared to take the exam as compared to their white counterparts. What does this tell us? This means that the disparities existed long before a candidate sat to take the exam. Several systems have failed many minority test-takers probably before they even entered Kindergarten. The ASWB data release shines light on the fact that persons of color have been disenfranchised on many fronts for far too long in this country.

I am privy to several efforts that ASWB is taking to ensure a fair exam. Those include, but are not limited to: switching to a 3-option multiple choice exam, providing free Exam Prep/Practice Exam materials and a host of other resources to test candidates, a plan to discount the fee for re-taking exam (the cost of the exam can be a barrier for many candidates), consideration of alternative options for people who just barely fail (with 1-2 points of passing), creation of a Resource Suite now available to Educators- books, exam prep materials, etc., creation of an Exam Prep app, creation of the Social Work Workforce Coalition- getting input and ideas from leaders in social work organizations, and formation of Community input sessions where social workers are asked to give input and ideas about improving the exam. The fact is, we need time to strengthen the Exam so that we can eliminate disparities and ensure that the exam does what it is supposed to do- provide protection to the public, professionalize the social work profession, and ensure minimum competency for those wishing to call themselves Social Workers.

From the Desk of:

Bynia Reed
6425 Ivy Spring Rd., Elkridge, MD 21075
(301) 466-2234
byniar@yahoo.com

A grave danger and risk will exist if we “open the floodgates” and allow anyone into our profession without demonstrating competence. Not everyone is or can be a social worker. We possess certain knowledge, skills, and abilities that allow us to work with and help vulnerable populations such as children, the elderly, persons struggling with addition and/or trauma, and those with mental health issues.

Imagine taking your child to undergo surgery and none of the physicians or surgical staff had to pass an exam in order to operate on your child? Can you imagine the danger and legal ramifications? If these Bills pass, our state regulatory board will see hundreds of thousands of lawsuits against people who are calling themselves social workers, but who are engaging in unsafe and unethical conduct because they were not weeded out of the profession. We must have gatekeeping. Our efforts need to go into giving ASWB the time, resources, and expectations needed to be those gatekeepers. We should not be hasty and make a poor choice for our state based off of a data release that tells many stories. Let’s wait for several data releases over the next 3-5 years and go from there. Please reject SB 871 and SB872

Thank you,



Bynia Reed, LCSW-C

SB0872_UNF_MdCSWC_State Board Soc. Work Examiners

Uploaded by: Christine Krone

Position: UNF



The Maryland Clinical Social Work Coalition

The MdcSWC, sponsored by the Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work, represents the interests of more than 9,300 licensed clinical social workers in Maryland.

TO: The Honorable Melony Griffith, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Mary Washington

FROM: Judith Gallant, LCSW-C, Chair, Maryland Clinical Social Work Coalition

DATE: March 10, 2023

RE: **OPPOSE** – Senate Bill 872 – *State Board of Social Work Examiners – Temporary License to Practice Social Work*

The Maryland Clinical Social Work Coalition (MdcSWC), sponsored by the Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work, represents the interests of more than 9,300 licensed clinical social workers in Maryland. On behalf of MdcSWC, we **oppose** Senate Bill 872.

Senate Bill 872 would authorize the State Board of Social Work Examiners (BSWE) to issue a temporary license to practice social work to an applicant who, except for passing an examination otherwise required under law, has met the appropriate education and experience requirements for a license issued to practice master social work or certified social work-clinical.

We do understand the need for temporary licensure but instead support Senate Bill 145 and the supervision provision of that bill as it applies to bachelor social work or master social work.

The provision states:

A TEMPORARY LICENSE ISSUED UNDER THIS SECTION AUTHORIZES THE HOLDER TO PRACTICE SOCIAL WORK IN THE STATE ONLY UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF A BOARD-APPROVED SUPERVISOR WHILE THE TEMPORARY LICENSE IS EFFECTIVE.

Further, a license to practice certified social work-clinical is the highest level of licensure requiring the most education and supervision. Current statute requires 2 years as a licensee with supervised experience of at least 3,000 hours, of which 1,500 hours are in face-to-face client contact. Supervisory services are informed by advanced training, years of experience, and mastery of a range of competencies. Components of supervision include guided practice, preparation, cultural competencies, evidence-based practice, consultation, and legal and ethical issues. Senate Bill 872 would eliminate that valuable learning experience. For this reason, we urge an unfavorable report.

For more information call:

Christine K. Krone
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
Danna L. Kauffman
410-244-7000

Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work: www.gwscsw.org

Contacts: Coalition Chair: Judy Gallant, LCSW-C; email: jg708@columbia.edu; mobile (301) 717-1004
Legislative Consultants: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer and Christine Krone, Schwartz, Metz, Wise & Kauffman, PA,
20 West Street, Annapolis, MD 21401

Email: pmetz@smwpa.com; mobile (410) 746-9003 ; ckrone@smwpa.com; mobile (410) 940-9165

NASW Maryland - 2023 SB 872 UNF - Social Worker Te

Uploaded by: Judith Schagrin

Position: UNF

**Senate Finance Committee
March 10, 2023**

Senate Bill 872

State Board of Social Work Examiners – Temporary License to Practice Social Work

*****OPPOSE*****

Maryland’s Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers represents social workers across the State of Maryland. We respectfully oppose Senate Bill 872, State Board of Social Work Examiners - Temporary License to Practice Social Work.

The field of Social Work has worked hard since its inception in the early 1900s to establish itself as a profession, a struggle that continues to this day. This is despite our now being the greatest provider of behavioral health services in the country, as well as recognized for work in public child welfare, administration, social policy, hospitals, schools, community centers, mobile crisis teams, and so on.

Social work wasn’t even recognized as a profession in Maryland until 1975, when the original Social Work Statute was finally passed. Title protection for social workers was a hard-fought win, bringing social workers in line with other professions - law, psychology, medicine, nursing, occupational therapy, physical therapy, licensed certified professional counselors, and so on - who require the education and training necessary to acquire a body of knowledge, a commitment to ethical practice, and that specifically name licensing examination as a measure of professional competency. Despite licensing requirements and title protection, however, respect for the profession is still regularly undermined by those who call people social workers who aren’t.

Entry into the field and practice longevity have historically been fraught with discrimination. Recently, the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) showed alarmingly disparate outcomes based on race, age, and those for whom English is a second language. We share a sense of urgency to stop the harm. However, we believe we must proceed in a thoughtful manner that provides a quick response to the ongoing systemic bias and oppression in standardized testing but also does not do damage to the hard fought recognition as a profession, and still fragile respect.

This is why we oppose SB 872, so that we have the opportunity to thoughtfully consider the possibility of unintended harmful consequences from altering the means by which one enters the social work profession, or gains recognition as a clinical practitioner. To fully craft a response to disparity in testing measures, we respectfully ask you to hit the “pause” button and enable a rigorous and comprehensive study of the impact of the changes proposed by SB872 on the profession, and to thoughtfully propose solutions that will not result in damage.

In short, we are concerned the bill will:

- Create a two-tiered profession - those social workers licensed by testing and those with a temporary license. The disproportionality will emulate the ASWB test results, resulting in licensing via testing for a predominantly White group, and temporary licensure for a

- predominantly Black and Brown group, older students, and non-native English speakers. “Separate but equal”?
- Impose barriers that will affect the portability of our social work license when moving to another state, and damage the ability for Maryland social workers to enter into a social work compact with other states.
- Negatively affect temporary licensees’ eligibility for insurance reimbursement and ultimately, long-term and stable employment.
- Delegitimize recognition as expert witnesses, already more heavily scrutinized for Black and Brown people, those whose first language is not English, and those with diverse abilities.
- Create the public the perception that requirements are being diluted, which can create economic disenfranchisement for those who are already marginalized. What will the impact be on social workers’ ongoing battle for adequate professional salaries and compensation?

These concerns, along with many others, are sufficient to oppose SB 872. We urge the State to bring together the current examination vendor and thought leaders in social work to rigorously assess the current state of disparities in testing data, improve upon and concretize the State’s position on civil rights requirements for testing vendors and give vendors the opportunity to produce accessible and equitable testing measures, thereby, essentially holding all health occupation testing vendors to the current Maryland Social Work Act mandate that “... examinations... shall strive to be free of cultural bias.”

In summary, we believe many questions and concerns must be considered before legislative changes are made to our profession’s requirements. We instead support legislation mandating the formation of a workgroup to propose steps forward to eliminate testing bias in a comprehensive and rigorous way. We also recommend short-term steps that can be taken immediately, especially identifying public funding for repeat testing.

Providing temporary licenses and eliminating the examination as a measure of competency unintentionally creates a separate but equal measure to enter the field, one that will most harm those this bill wishes to help.

We ask for an **unfavorable report** for SB 872.

National Association of Social Workers – Maryland Chapter

Legislative Committee

SWBilltestimonyKH.pdf

Uploaded by: Kristine Heflin

Position: UNF

Good afternoon committee members,

I am writing to share my views on the proposed legislation to waive the need for examination requirements for social workers. I understand that this bill was introduced to meet the needs of addressing the lack of social workers in the state as well as the concern that the driver for lack of social workers is due to the inability for Black and Brown social workers to pass the licensing board.

Although I agree that the lack of BIPOC social workers passing the licensing exam is indeed a result of systematic and structural racism in standardized testing and needs to be addressed at a policy level, waiving examination requirements either temporarily or permanently is not the answer to the problem we are trying to solve.

I can not over communicate the level of risk to our community and our social workers having unlicensed people in the field will produce. As social workers, we work with marginalized populations that are at high risk for abuse. Having individuals who have not met the minimum standards for skills and competency will only exacerbate the potential for abuse. I am a believer that social workers will have their client's best interests at heart but may have the potential to cause harm or not have the competency to report high risk situations. Further, as social workers our charge is to protect our clients. Licensure IS how we protect our clients. Removing that requirement reduces any protection we have for our clients.

Lastly, if we make changes to our licensing requirements we run the risk of de-professionalizing the profession in a way that damages all of the respect and strides we have made over the last 25 years. Ask yourself, would you work with an attorney who did not pass the bar, or a physician that did not pass her boards? The answer is no, the same answer will hold true for social workers. Agencies will not be able to bill for services, social workers will lose pay and that will cause even more of a social work shortage.

Please vote no on waiving the licensing requirements for bachelors and graduate level social workers.

Respectfully Submitted,

Khristine Heflin, LCSW-C

Testimony (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Kimberly Stroud

Position: UNF

Testimony

Re: SB0871

Date: 3/9/2023

The purpose of this letter is to submit written testimony opposing Bill SB0871. I am a licensed social worker in the state of Maryland that passed a licensing examination in 1999. I prepared for and passed the licensing examination after working very hard to show proof of knowledge gained during my Masters Level education. I am absolutely opposed to anyone having the ability to practice as a social worker without being properly licensed. Secondly, I am opposed to anyone having the ability to practice as a social worker without passing a licensing examination that gives them the opportunity to demonstrate proof of the knowledge that was obtained as a student in an accredited institution.

It would be without legitimacy and very dangerous to allow any persons to practice as a social worker. without given the chance to prove the knowledge that they have obtained. This can only be done by passing a licensing examination.

As an African American woman who has personally witnessed the “watered down” effect of the social worker profession, I am a strong advocate to upholding the high standard that was in place when I began practice in 1999. I have seen persons enter the social work profession, specifically in the clinical setting without being prepared to do so. I have also witnessed others outside of the social work profession exercising their right to “practice” or give social work advice regarding a patient without having the proper knowledge to do so.

To pass this bill would further lessen the high standard of professionalism that we, as licensed social workers have tried so hard to uphold. It would also put those in the community who need our services at risk in the event that they so happen to be treated by one who has not shown the ability to practice as a social worker by passing a licensing examination.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to weigh in on this bill. I will continue to advocate for proof of 100% accountability for those who desire to practice as a social work professional.

Kimberly Stroud, LMSW

4 - SB 872 - FIN - B&C - Oppose.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: State of Maryland (MD)

Position: UNF



Board of Social Work Examiners

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

Sondra G. Petty, Chair – Daphne McClellan, Executive Director

4201 Patterson Avenue, Suite 318 Baltimore MD 21215 Phone: 410-764-4788

2023 SESSION POSITION PAPER

BILL NO: SB 872
COMMITTEE: Finance
POSITION: Oppose

TITLE: State Board of Social Work Examiners – Temporary License to Practice Social Work

BILL ANALYSIS: This bill, would authorize the State Board of Social Work Examiners (the “Board”) to issue a temporary license to practice social work to certain applicants who meet certain requirements and eliminates the requirement to take a licensing examination.

POSITION AND RATIONALE: The Board opposes SB 872.

The primary responsibility of the Board is to protect the public from the unlicensed and potentially incompetent or unethical practice of social work. The requirements to be licensed as a Master Social Worker (LMSW) are an MSW from an accredited school, a criminal background check, and a basic, entry level exam. This bill would permit a person with an MSW to be licensed as an LMSW for two years by simply demonstrating that they have a degree and have passed a criminal background check. With that license the licensee could engage in all manner of social work practice including formulating a diagnosis, treatment of biopsychosocial conditions, treatment of behavioral health disorders and the provision of psychotherapy; as long as that individual is being supervised by a person with an LCSW-C license.

Depending on the course choices a social work student makes, they can be prepared with a number of clinical courses or with very few. Some social workers graduate with only 6 credit hours that might be considered clinical in nature. For the protection of the public, we depend on a combination of education, testing and supervision. None of these alone are sufficient. We believe that an exam is an important part of the process.

In order to obtain the clinical social work license (LCSW-C) an applicant must already have an LMSW, they must also meet requirements for clinical coursework, experience and supervision which all lead up to the requirement to take a clinical examination. The LCSW-C allows the licensee to practice independently; to evaluate, diagnose, and treat biopsychosocial conditions, mental and emotional conditions and impairments, and behavioral health disorders, including substance use disorders, addictive disorders, and mental disorders; as well as petition for emergency evaluation, provide psychotherapy and supervise other social workers in their clinical practice.

Determining an applicant’s readiness and competency to engage in these important tasks is the reason that the Board exists. We feel strongly that passage of a clinical exam is essential. There is no other state in this country which allows social workers to obtain a clinical license without

taking and passing the ASWB clinical exam. Until another exam is available or there is another way to demonstrably determine competency, we would be shirking our responsibility to the public to grant applicants the Temporary LCSW-C license called for in this legislation. Furthermore, a temporary LCSW-C license is not necessary. LMSWs may engage in clinical practice under the supervision of an LCSW-C. Aside from owning their own private practice or practicing without supervision, a person with an LMSW is not being held back from using their degree or earning a living.

The Board is also concerned about some of the administrative aspects of this bill. There are over 17,000 licensed social workers in Maryland. Depending on the date of licensure, licensees must renew their licenses by October 31st of even numbered or odd numbered years. This legislation would set the temporary license for expiration 2 years from the date it was issued; requiring a much more complex and time-consuming process of keeping track of when each license would expire and whether a temporarily licensed social worker was practicing without a license beyond that date.

Finally, the fact that this is an emergency bill would make this process nearly impossible to implement. Regulations for the practice of social work by people who are temporarily licensed do not exist and would need to be written and put in place.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony. For all of the reasons stated, the Board of Social Work Examiners respectfully requests an unfavorable report on SB 872.

If you require additional information, please contact Dr. Daphne McClellan, Executive Director at (410) 764-4722 or at Daphne.McClellan@maryland.gov.

The opinion of the Board expressed in this document does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the Administration

SB872 Written testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Terri Collins-Green

Position: UNF

POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

BILL: SB872 Authorizing the State Board of Social Work Examiners to issue a temporary license to practice social work to an applicant who, except for passing an examination otherwise required under law, has met the appropriate education and experience requirements for a license issued to practice master social work or certified social work-clinical.

FROM: Terri Collins-Green, LCSW-C

POSITION: Oppose

DATE: 3/10/2023

I am an LCSW-C whose been licensed in Maryland since 2007 (#13410). I am proud to be a social worker and serve the citizens of Maryland. I've been a Board Certified Clinical Supervisor since 2013. I've worked in a private practice. I have been an adjunct faculty teaching MSW students since 2016. I have been a defense-based forensic social worker since 2011.

I am an African American woman at the end of the baby boomer era, raised in Carroll County, with a mother who graduated from the last segregated high school in 1962, who is the first generation in my family to graduate from college. I had a family member who completed suicide in 1976 that devastated my family for years.

I know the pain of racism. Hearing the echoes of the "n" word hurled at me in public school, and on warm summer nights in my segregated, black community when the neighboring town was a known KKK hub.

Racial disparities in Exams Is Not New or Specific to Social Work

I use this operational definition of racism as coined by Ken Wystma in his book, *The Myth of Equality: Uncovering the Roots of Injustice and Privilege* (2017), racism is the diminishment of the worth of men and women in and through bias, systems, and power structures that disadvantage them intangible ways based on skin color...Racism in the United States is worse than we thought, its lasting consequences are more significant than we think, and our responsibility is greater than we've been taught. (Wystma,p. 6)

I acknowledge and validate the high cost of racism to this group of 1227 individuals who at no fault of their own, and at great financial cost have been negatively affected by the racial disparities in the social work exam. AND, at the same time, I assert that it is inconceivable that no other professional exams are not biased and discriminatory. Who's minding the entire store?

According to the website, International Affairs Office, U.S. Department of Education there are 33 professions in the US which have either a licensure or certification process in place.

The term “licensure” generally refers to an official process, administered by a state-level authority, that is required by law in order for an individual to practice a regulated profession. The term “certification” generally refers to a function administered by a nongovernmental organization, which is intended to further recognize professional competence based on having met the quality standards of the organization. The prevalence and relevance of certification varies by profession.

In fact, Bloomberg Law published this article in July 2021, researched by Deborah Jones Merritt, Carol Chomsky, Claudia Angelos, and Joan Howarth, all four authors are members of the [Collaboratory on Legal Education and Licensing for Practice](#), a group of 11 scholars who have studied and written about the bar exam, licensing, and legal education for many years found racial disparities in the Bar exam:

Stark racial disparities mark the legal profession’s licensing process. [Last year](#), just 66% of Black law school graduates passed the bar exam on their first try. Among White candidates, 88% succeeded. Other racial groups fell in between, ranging from a 76% first-time pass rate for Latinx candidates to an 80% rate for Asian exam takers. But the exam’s disparate impact reaches even further than that. The AccessLex report reveals that even after controlling for all of these factors (household size, household income, employment, use of a commercial prep course, LSAT score, law school selectivity), candidates of color were significantly more likely to fail the bar exam than White candidates.

They concluded about the bar exam:

Our profession, in sum, maintains an entrance exam that predictably and inexorably favors White candidates. The exam requires intensive and expensive preparation that White candidates can more likely afford. It then employs a testing format and environment known to produce stereotype threat in candidates of color.

Social worker shortage

There have been arguments asserted that these racial disparities have contributed to a shortage of social workers which is not true. And that there must be some hasty solution to provide a substantial number of social workers to fill positions to provide services to foster youth. According to this study by Lin, et al, US Social Worker Workforce Report Card: Forecasting Nationwide Shortages (2016) found:

According to the projections, the number of states with shortage ratios more severe than the current national ratio will increase from 11 states in 2012 to 30 states by 2030 and the nation will experience a total shortfall of over 195,000 social workers, with the most severe shortages occurring in the western and southern regions of the United States.

The shortage of social workers is due to the rapid growth of the industry and need for social work services. Per the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, overall employment of social workers is projected to grow 9 percent from 2021 to 2031, faster than the average for all occupations. About 74,700 openings for social workers are projected each year, on average, over the decade. Many of those openings are expected to result from the need to replace workers who transfer to different occupations or exit the labor force, such as to retire.

Non-profit Organizations and Social Work Practice

I respect the role of MARFY in the Maryland community, however of the 15 Board Members and 35 Staff Members listed on their website, only one person is a licensed social worker. I would assert that social workers should not be regarded as “case managers only” or as “babysitters” for foster care youth. I am gravely concerned that loosening the requirements for the social work profession by opting out and or eliminating the exam will encourage agencies to use social workers primarily as case managers.

Social work is defined in Maryland Health Occupations Article, 19-101(p-1), Annotated Code of Maryland:

“Practice social work” means to apply the theories, knowledge, procedures, methods ... to restore or enhance social and or psychosocial functioning of individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations, or communities through:

Assessment which is defined under COMAR 10.42.02.02 means obtaining and analyzing information about a client and the client’s circumstance while using appropriate social work knowledge, skills, values, and theory to develop a service, intervention, or treatment plan.

Clinical social workers

According to the American Board of Clinical Social Work, clinical social work is a healthcare profession based on theories and methods of prevention and treatment in providing mental-health/healthcare services, with special focus on behavioral and bio-psychosocial problems and disorders. Clinical social work’s unique attributes include use of the person-in-environment perspective, respect for the primacy of client rights and strong therapeutic alliance between client and practitioner. With 250,000 practitioners serving millions of client consumers, clinical social workers constitute the largest group of mental-health/healthcare providers in the nation.

Consideration of Long term Negative consequences

There are approximately 18,000 licensed social workers in Maryland, between 11,000-12,000 are LCSW-Cs, approximately 6,000 LMSWs, 300 LCSWs, 420 LBSWs. The SWEAR report quotes 1,227 impacted MSWs and states:

“Even without exams, there are substantial requirements for licensure, including graduation from a nationally accredited school—which includes hundreds of supervised hours of fieldwork, thousands of hours of supervised practice, and a background check. This is a sufficient baseline to ensure that social workers are prepared to practice safely and equitably.”

Are we considering sacrificing the professionalism of social work practice in Maryland, and risk limiting future job opportunities for social workers. I ask, whether the following items have been considered as long-term, collateral consequences AND can I be assured that these three areas of concern have been researched and addressed to the fullest extent and that there will be no impact on social workers?

Private, state and federal insurance administrators are the gatekeepers for allowing third-party billing. There is no way of forecasting how these industries will respond to social workers without any licensure exam process or opting out. They may choose to turn to other mental health providers (LCPC, Psychologists) for third-party billing, thus closing the door on opportunities for social workers who want to pursue a private practice. Has this potential change been considered?

I raise the question regarding malpractice insurance coverage. Will those who opt out or have no access to a licensure exam be able to obtain malpractice insurance. I have not been able to ascertain an affirmative answer to this question, has this been considered and properly addressed to ensure coverage?

Finally, as a defense-based forensic social worker for more than a decade, I provide expert witness testimony in clinical social work. I am concerned about the potential negative impact of clinical social workers being able to pass/withstand the Daubert standard when there is either no licensure exam and or one can opt out. On August 28, 2020, the Maryland Court of Appeals held that Maryland will now “implement a single standard by which courts evaluate all expert testimony: *Daubert*.” This is a higher standard of expertise allowed by the judge, that requires the analysis for admitting expert testimony under *Daubert* requiring a trial court to focus on the methodology employed by the expert and whether the conclusion is too distinct from that methodology. Judges and state’s attorney’s may dispute the legitimacy of the social work profession in comparison to other mental health professions who will continue to use a licensure exam as confirmation of competence. Has this been considered?

Objectionable Workgroup

I have heard rumors regarding the makeup of the “workgroup”, that is proposed to be impacted MSWs and impacted consumers who have not had access to a social worker. If this is the proposed work group, I am shocked. Who decided this should be the workgroup and how equitable is this when the voice of 18,000 licensed social workers have had no input as to how/who represents the profession in the formulation of a new, clinical assessment approach to our profession. This is unacceptable and more so it is not true to the ideals of democracy. This plan to find alternative solutions serves only to exclude the current licensed social workers of Maryland, many of whom would be tasked with providing clinical supervision to this group. At best this is a double standard, and will cause divisiveness within the field. Should a resident doctor propose to measure competency for a surgeon or a law student propose competency for a trial attorney?

Do No Harm

In conclusion, social workers serve the most vulnerable populations. As an LCSW-C, I've sat with a client experiencing suicidal ideation and had to assess their acuity.. I've testified as an expert in clinical social work on adolescent brain development on behalf of a teenager who is facing a long prison sentence. Peoples' lives are at stake, are we willing to sacrifice the lives of Maryland citizens who are suffering from psychological distress and mental illness by taking such hasty actions without considering long-term consequences.

Everyone deserves equity and justice, those maligned MSWs AND the social work profession in general. ASWB must be held accountable, must be forced to clean the slate, and start afresh. Their process for the formulation of the examination and questions has proven to be biased, faulty, and discriminatory. I inform this body that the entire history of the social work profession has proven to be “racist” as affirmed in the June 2021 report, Undoing Racism: NASW Report to the Profession on Racial Justice Priorities and Action, issued by NASW-National affirmed:

Social work is unique in its dual focus of enhancing human well-being and championing social justice. Yet our occupation's history is also linked to many shameful chapters in America's story. Despite visible leadership in our nation's most important social justice movements and in creating our country's social safety net, **the social work profession has also contributed to ongoing discrimination and oppression of people of color through its systems, policies, and practices.**

NASW-National in this report stated: “THIS IS UNACCEPTABLE AND **WE NEED TO MAKE AMENDS.**” They went on in the report to lay out a two-year plan: Year One-Responding to the

Crisis and Year Two-Planning Next Steps, for making amends. I find it hypocritical that two years later that NASW-National stated:

On February 3, 2023, the National Association of Social Workers announced that they oppose the use of the ASWB exams, based on the clear and incontrovertible evidence that they discriminate against marginalized groups.

I ask where is the same grace for ASWB in making amends by having at a minimum of the same two years to make needed changes.

I ask that we, “not throw the baby out with the dirty water.”

References

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National Law Review, March 7, 2023, Volume XIII, Number 66

[Maryland Adopts Daubert Standard for Expert Testimony: Fallout from Jurisprudential Drift](#)

NASW, June 2021

[UNDOING RACISM THROUGH SOCIAL WORK](#)

Submitted by

Terri Collins-Green, LCSW-C (license #13410)

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443-280-2227

SB871 and SB872 SSW Bills SSW Postmus FIN-LOI 3-10

Uploaded by: Judy Postmus

Position: INFO

March 10, 2023

LETTER OF INFORMATION

SB 871 Social Workers - Licensure Examinations - Moratorium and Workgroup SB 872 State Board of Social Work Examiners - Temporary License to Practice Social Work

Chair Griffith, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Committee:

This past summer, the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB), the organization currently responsible for creating, implementing, and monitoring Social Work's National Licensing Examination, released a report documenting exam passage rates for each state. Data clearly shows evidence of extreme racial and age biases in the exam in Maryland and across the country. These biases contribute to a documented shortage of diverse licensed social workers.

As a concerned dean of the state's largest School of Social Work (SSW), we need to immediately address this discriminatory exam and assessment process to effect rapid equity in the nation's social work and behavioral health workforce. Specific immediate and longer-term proposed actions include:

1. Form an expert commission to examine the causes of disparities in pass rates, and temporarily suspend the test requirement for Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW) until the commission presents their findings. This commission should include representatives from Maryland Schools of Social Work and other social work organizations. The work should be done within two years. During that time, all graduates from Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)-accredited schools can apply, for free, for a temporary license.
2. Make all ASWB LMSW examination prep materials free.
3. Charge a single fee for exam (no fee to retest).
4. Shrink the 90-day limit between test attempts.
5. Provide more specific feedback on incorrect answers and allow test takers to only retake the section of the exam that they did not pass.
6. De-couple the master's level ASWB exam from the interstate compact. The criteria will be based on your home state's requirements for licensure.
7. Examine other states who do not rely on exams at the entry level licensing to determine how successful those states are in supporting and monitoring the social work profession.

With Social Work workforce shortages across the nation, it is imperative for us all to work together to find responsible resolutions. Should you have any questions that we can help to inform, please contact Dr. Judy L. Postmus at dean@ssw.umaryland.edu.

Sincerely,

Judy L. Postmus, Ph.D., ACSW
Dean & Professor

Cc: Senator Mary Washington